

# **Firstfruits: Inaugural and Subsequent Spirit Baptism in Acts**

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## **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the dissertation. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

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Frank Harrison

24 November 2018

## Abstract

What William P. Atkinson calls “the Dunn Debate” began in 1970 with the publication of James D. G. Dunn’s *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. Dunn’s painstaking monograph proposed that, for the writers of the New Testament, baptism in the Holy Spirit functioned as a *conversion-initiation* event, an essential part of a person’s becoming a Christian. This thesis posed a fundamental challenge to Pentecostal/Charismatic theology, and for over four decades Dunn’s critics, mainly from this tradition, have defended the view that baptism in the Spirit is a *commissioning-empowerment* event distinct from and typically subsequent to the new birth. Given that Luke-Acts has been of central importance in formulating the Pentecostal/Charismatic view, chapter 1 of this dissertation reviews the debate surrounding five events in Acts where Spirit baptism is reported: Pentecost, Samaria, the conversion of Saul, Caesarea and Ephesus. Chapter 2 proposes an alternative understanding of each of these events, which is then brought into dialogue with the conversion-initiation and commissioning-empowerment approaches, with a view to determining the function of Spirit baptism in Luke’s theology and the nature (normative or otherwise) of the miraculous phenomena reported on these occasions. In the course of chapter 2 arguments are developed to support several guiding propositions. *First*: the theophany of Acts 2:1-4 describes the dedication of a spiritual temple in which the Holy Spirit descends to indwell the disciples, who also constitute a renewed Israel. *Second*: these disciples are the “firstfruits” of the Jews, and at the “Pentecosts” at Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus the inaugural representatives of the Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John respectively are also received into this renewed Israel and the living temple of the Spirit. *Third*: these four inaugural events are all corporate. *Fourth*: the story

of Babel is a recurring theme in these inaugural events. *Fifth:* the story of Babel is also a theme in the group counter-episodes with which the inaugural events are paired—a factor which confirms the corporate nature of the inaugural events themselves. *Sixth:* the signs which accompany the inaugural events serve to attest “possession” by the Spirit. *Seventh:* in an honour-shame culture such attestation is important to demonstrate that belief in Jesus is an honourable change of allegiance. *Eighth:* Saul’s baptism in the Spirit is individual rather than corporate and subsequent rather than inaugural—Saul is not among the firstfruits of the Jews. *Ninth:* Spirit baptism accompanied by attesting signs is recorded only for inaugural events: no such signs are reported for non-inaugural events. The dissertation concludes that in subsequent (non-inaugural) Spirit baptisms the Spirit fulfils a commissioning-empowerment role, that Spirit baptism is part of Christian initiation, and that there is no evidence in Acts that it is either deferred or accompanied by attesting signs.



## Introduction

The pentecostal<sup>1</sup> movement is *significant*. From its beginnings around the start of the twentieth century, pentecostalism has expanded to reach an estimated 683 million this year (2018). This compares with 1.2 billion Catholics, 567 million Protestants and 285 million Orthodox. There is considerable overlap in these figures, since many people sharing pentecostal views belong to non-Pentecostal denominations (Johnson, Zurlo, Hickman & Crossing, 2018, p. 24). Nevertheless, such phenomenal growth invites scholars to pay greater attention to the movement (Mittelstadt, 2010, p. 3).

The pentecostal movement is also *diverse*. Most commonly, classic Pentecostals believe in a baptism in the Spirit subsequent to conversion and evidenced by speaking in tongues. Not all, however, teach subsequence. Some Oneness Pentecostals argue that the new birth requires both water and Spirit baptism, and that both may be expected to occur together (Reed, 2002, p. 943; Howell, 1985, pp. 212-213). Nor do all insist on speaking in tongues. The Elim Pentecostal Churches are content to draw on Mark 16:17 (KJV) and affirm that “every believer is also promised ... the baptism in the Holy Spirit with signs following” (“What we believe”, n.d.), a statement which the Assemblies of God has seen as “fudging the basic Pentecostal distinctive” since it allows “signs” other than tongues as evidence of Spirit baptism (Hathaway, 1998, p. 36).

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation “Pentecostal” refers to classical Pentecostal denominations or individuals, while “pentecostal” (lower-cased) is used generically to refer to groups or individuals associated with any of the Pentecostal, Charismatic or Neocharismatic movements.

The classical Pentecostal denominations were supplemented in the 1960s and 1970s by the Charismatic Movement, which brought interest in glossolalia, physical healing and prophecy into more established denominations (Cartledge, 2005, p. 4; “Introduction”, 2002, p. xix). Baptism in the Spirit has sometimes been reinterpreted in line with denominational beliefs. Catholics, for example, often understand Spirit baptism as a vital actualisation of grace already received in baptism and confirmation, e.g., 2 Timothy 1:6 (Petts, 1987, pp. 39-41). In the 1980s the so-called “Third Wave” arrived (Cartledge, 2005, p. 4). This movement also rejected the two-stage process, believing that the Spirit was received at conversion. For these pentecostals tongues was simply one charismatic gift among many (Wagner, 2002, p. 1141). The Third Wave has more recently come to be viewed as part of a broader Neocharismatic movement which cannot be classified as either Pentecostal or Charismatic but shares an emphasis on spiritual gifts and signs and wonders. In other ways their theology, organisation and spirituality are highly varied. Neocharismatic groups include African indigenous churches, the Chinese house-church movement and many Latin American megachurches. (“Introduction”, 2002, pp. xix-xxi).

Today the pentecostal movement has *a growing academic presence*. Most of the early Pentecostal leaders received only a basic education. They were “amateurs” driven by faith, not professional scholars. Convinced that Christ’s return was imminent, they judged that lengthy formal study would have conflicted with the urgency of their mission (Vondey, 2013, pp. 134-136). Since about 1970, however, pentecostal scholars have moved progressively into the academic landscape, addressing such questions as social justice, interreligious dialogue, globalisation and postmodernism (Mittelstadt, 2010, p. 4). Writing in 2005, eminent New Testament scholar François Bovon expressed his regret

that he had not more fully investigated the contributions of Pentecostal scholars in the realm of Luke's<sup>2</sup> pneumatology (Mittelstadt, 2010, p. 10).

The world's largest Pentecostal grouping is the Assemblies of God, which claims 67 million members worldwide (World Assemblies of God Fellowship, n.d., para. 1). The Australian branch, Australian Christian Churches (ACC), is likewise the largest Pentecostal group in the country, claiming 350,000 members ("Australian Christian Churches: Who we are", n.d., para. 2), although the departure of the Hillsong Church congregations in September 2018 now reduces this figure by some 40,000 (Houston, B. & Alcorn W., 2018; Hillsong Church, 2018, p. 10).

The seventh article of the *Fundamental Truths* of the Assemblies of God (AG) in the U.S. states:

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Cor 12:1–31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12–17; 10:44–46; 11:14–16; 15:7–9) (Menzies & Horton, 1993, p. 122).

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<sup>2</sup> I will follow the convention of using "Luke" for the anonymous author of Luke-Acts.

Article 4.13 of the ACC's *Doctrinal Basis* is similar:

We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the bestowing of the believer with power to be an effective witness for Christ. This experience is distinct from, and subsequent to, the new birth; is received by faith, and is accompanied by the manifestation of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, as the initial evidence (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4; 8:15-19; 11:14-17; 19:1-7) (“Australian Christian Churches: Doctrinal basis”, n.d., para. 4.13).

It is this view of Spirit baptism as separate from and subsequent to conversion which James D. G. Dunn sets out to critique.

For pentecostals, Luke's writings have been of central importance in formulating their view of Spirit baptism. Pentecostal pioneers took Acts as the controlling theological document through which the rest of the Bible was viewed, because Acts gave the definitive account of apostolic Christianity. The Gospels were highly important, but they were read through the lens of Acts. The Epistles played a secondary role (Archer, 2001, p. 67). To the present day pentecostal theologians and historians recognise the “substantial dependence on Luke-Acts” for the development of the movement's identity and doctrine (Mittelstadt, 2010, “Preface”, para. 1).

Accordingly, this dissertation will focus on five passages in the Book of Acts often cited by pentecostals as instances of Spirit baptism: Pentecost (Acts 2), Samaria (Acts 8), Saul's conversion (Acts 9), Cornelius and his friends (Acts 10), and the disciples of John at Ephesus (Acts 19). Chapter 1 will begin with a review of Dunn's treatment of these

five passages. Next, a range of responses to Dunn by mainly pentecostal scholars will be outlined. The key point of contention is that while Dunn views these passages as *conversion-initiation* events, his pentecostal dialogue partners consider them to be events of *commissioning-empowerment* distinct from conversion.

Chapter 2 will then develop an alternative approach to these five events. It will be argued that in Acts 2 Luke has in mind the dedication of Solomon's Temple. The theophany (sound of wind and tongues of fire) at Pentecost marks the divine entry into a new temple, with the Spirit coming to indwell believers. On this feast of firstfruits, the disciples, who constitute a renewed Israel, become the "firstfruits" of the Jews to be indwelt by the Spirit, and the miraculous signs attest their "possession" by the Spirit. At the "Pentecosts" at Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus the firstfruits of the Samaritans, Gentiles, and the continuing disciples of John are likewise inaugurated into the renewed Israel and the living temple of the Spirit. At each of these events of *corporate inauguration*, the attesting signs also divinely validate (declare honourable) the new allegiance of these firstfruits to Jesus—a matter no small importance in a group-oriented culture. It will be proposed that speaking in tongues at Pentecost is an enacted reversal of the events at Babel, and that the other three inaugural events share this theme of the reunion of previously diverse groups. Conversely, opposition to the church at each of these cities also contains echoes of Babel with its dubious unity, confusion and futility.

Saul's Spirit baptism in Acts 9 differs from the foregoing events in that it is subsequent rather than inaugural: Saul is not among the firstfruits of the Jews. It will be maintained that, apart from the four inaugural events Luke has no record of any group or individual, Saul included, receiving Spirit baptism which is accompanied by attesting signs. The

views of Dunn and his dialogue partners will then be revisited in the light of these conclusions.

Narrative criticism is an art as well as a methodology and calls for judgment. The possibility that literary parallels, such as those employed in this dissertation, are fortuitous can never be eliminated. However, parallels which contain multiple matchings of words, events, circumstances, context, syntax and/or semantics, and parallels that intersect and reinforce one another, are much less likely to be accidental (cf. Gunn, 1974, pp. 302-303). As Alter notes:

The Bible ... constantly insists on parallels of situation and reiterations of motif that provide moral and psychological commentary on each other (like the chain of sibling struggles, the displacement of the elder by the younger, in Genesis) (Alter, 2011, p. 115).

Likewise, Fokkelman's remark concerning the Old Testament is not inapplicable to Luke-Acts:

Hebrew prose writers as well as poets like to use the device of repetition, and they use it systematically and deliberately. At the same time they know very well that repetition for the sake of it soon degenerates into monotony. This is why they developed a sophisticated technique of *varied repetition*, with the primary purpose of expanding the richness of meanings and keeping all sorts of surprises in store for us (Fokkelman, 1999, p. 112; italics in original).

Chapter 1 follows Dunn's approach of addressing the relevant passages in turn. This chapter outlines the views of Dunn and his dialogue partners: critical comments are reserved for chapter 2 in light of the argument developed there. Chapter 2 also addresses the passages in turn, so concluding subsections draw together arguments which emerge in specific contexts and provide some further material. In-line biblical quotations, shown in italics, are taken from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated. Abbreviations for Bible versions and several other sources are given in the references.

# Chapter 1. Dunn's Thesis – The Debate

## 1.1 Dunn's Thesis

A new era for pentecostal scholarship began in 1970 with the publication of James Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*. Dunn wrote:

I hope to show that for the writers of the NT the baptism in or gift of the Spirit was part of the event (or process) of becoming a Christian, together with the effective proclamation of the Gospel, belief in (εἰς) Jesus as Lord, and water-baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus; [and] that it was the chief element in conversion-initiation so that only those who had thus received the Spirit could be called Christians (Dunn, 1970, p. 4).

Dunn's work constituted a fundamental challenge to pentecostal belief in a post-conversion experience of Spirit baptism. In formulating their response to Dunn's hermeneutical and exegetical challenge, a number of pentecostal scholars entered the world of critical scholarship (Mittelstadt, 2010, pp. 3-4, 15). The more than forty years of dialogue which have ensued have produced little movement by either party. But while Dunn's position remains essentially unchanged, his influence has proved enduring: "Pentecostals continue to find no dialogue partner more provocative and stimulating" (Mittelstadt, 2010, pp. 47-48). In the following subsections Dunn's views on each of the five central passages will be outlined, along with his understanding of Jesus' anointing with the Spirit in Luke 3. This is an important preliminary, since pentecostal writers



commonly interpret this passage as a precedent for viewing Spirit baptism as a second work of the Spirit (e.g., Ervin, 1984, pp. 5-6).

### ***1.1.1 Jesus at the Jordan (Luke 3:21-22)***

Pentecostals have argued that Jesus's baptism at the Jordan<sup>3</sup> was followed by a subsequent experience of the Spirit. Jesus from the beginning was surely no less full of the Spirit than John the Baptist (Luke 1:35; cf. 1:15). His anointing with the Spirit was therefore a second experience which equipped him with power for ministry (Luke 3:21-22; 4:1, 14, 18; Acts 10:38) (Dunn, 1970, pp. 23-24).

Dunn (1970, pp. 24, 26) responds that we are not merely dealing with a second stage in Jesus' life. Jesus' anointing by the Spirit was a unique event for a unique person at a unique moment in salvation history. Dunn's argument here draws on what Hans Conzelmann understood to be Luke's view of salvation history. Conzelmann believed that Luke distinguishes the following periods:

- (i) The epoch of Israel
  - (ii) The epoch of Jesus' ministry
  - (iii) The epoch of the church, culminating in the parousia
- (Conzelmann, 1960, pp. 16-17).

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<sup>3</sup> Since this dissertation is an intratextual rather than a historically oriented study, events and characters should be understood as those "within the text" unless otherwise stated.

Conzelmann's three epochs have been the subject of considerable controversy. For example, he regarded the theology of the birth stories as different from that of Luke-Acts, reflecting a Proto-Lucan source (Oliver, 1964, p. 203), and therefore began his study of Luke's theology with chapter 3. Talbert comments:

The response to this position has been unanimously negative. On one side, some scholars have accepted Conzelmann's general scheme of salvation history and have tried to fit the birth narratives into that scheme. Still others have used the birth narrative to challenge Conzelmann's picture of Lucan salvation history (Talbert, 1981, p. 202).

Dunn aligns more closely with the first group of scholars. He explicitly endorses Conzelmann's three epochs (Dunn, 1970, p. 40; citing Conzelmann, 1960, p. 150). He sides with Oliver (1964) and Tatum (1967) and against Minear (1966) by assigning Luke 1–2, together with John's ministry, to Conzelmann's first epoch, and Jesus' ministry to the second (Dunn, 1970, pp. 31-32; cf. Talbert, 1981, p. 202, footnotes 30, 31).

According to Conzelmann (1960, pp. 21, 101), the break between the first two epochs is indicated by Luke 16:16. The law and the prophets were in effect *μέχρι Ἰωάννου*, *until John*—*μέχρι* being taken in the sense that John is included with, rather than distinguished from, the law and the prophets—and *since then the good news of the kingdom is proclaimed*. Luke even places the account of John's arrest (Luke 3:19-20) *before* the account of Jesus' baptism so as to emphasise the separation between the two epochs and the two ministries. Dunn (1970, p. 25) endorses both these arguments.

In Dunn's view, Jesus' experience at the Jordan marks the beginning of the second epoch. *For Jesus alone* it marks the beginning of the end-time and the new covenant (Dunn, 1970, p. 24). Therefore, while this may be a second experience of the Spirit for Jesus, it is not a second experience for him *within the same stage of salvation history*. But this is what the pentecostal view requires to sustain a parallel with the Spirit baptisms recorded in Acts (Dunn, 1970, pp. 24-25). The coming of the Spirit upon Jesus is an initiation into the new age, where he takes on the role of the anointed one, the Messiah. Empowerment for service is not the reason for his anointing with the Spirit, but only a corollary to it (Dunn, 1970, pp. 28-29, 31-32).

### **1.1.2 Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12)**

Pentecostals have argued that the disciples received the Holy Spirit after Jesus' resurrection (John 22:20). This was an event in which they were granted salvation and eternal life (e.g., Aker, 1999, p. 137). The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost was then a second experience providing power for service (e.g., Pearlman, 1981, chap. 9.IV.5.a.1). This, Dunn claims, raises a basic methodological issue. It is poor hermeneutics to treat the Bible as a homogeneous whole from which texts can be selected at will, merging the different language and concepts of different writers into an often extra-biblical framework. In this case Luke's account of Pentecost is being read as though it were co-authored by John. Luke-Acts must be understood on its own terms before correlations with other books are attempted (Dunn, 1970, pp. 38-40).

Pentecostals may be right to stress that Pentecost was an experience of empowerment, but they are

wrong in making Pentecost only and primarily an experience of empowering. On the contrary, the Baptism in the Spirit, as always, is primarily initiatory, and only secondarily an empowering. The fact is that the phrase “baptism in Spirit” is never directly associated with the promise of power (Dunn, 1970, p. 54).

Dunn believes that what the Jordan was for Jesus, Pentecost was for the disciples. Jesus, and Jesus alone, entered the new age and the new covenant when he was baptised in the Spirit at the Jordan. His representative death meant that the new covenant could now be extended to those who had remained faithful and waited at Jerusalem (Dunn, 1970, p. 40). His death was a baptism in Spirit-and-fire on behalf of his people (Luke 12:49-50). This was necessary because his people were so sinful that this baptism of wrath would have overwhelmed them. They are therefore baptised with the Spirit only (Acts 1:5), not the Spirit and fire which John had mistakenly expected (Luke 3:16) (Dunn, 1970, pp. 41-43).

For Jesus, the end-time and the new covenant began at the Jordan. For his disciples they began at Pentecost, the beginning of the third epoch. Only at Pentecost was the prophecy of Joel fulfilled. The *last days* (Acts 2:17) came for the disciples with the distinctively Christian experience of Spirit baptism (Dunn, 1970, pp. 46-47). Only at Pentecost did they receive the gift of the Spirit, a gift described as ἡ ἐπαγγελία, God’s covenant promise (Acts 2:38-39). Already in the *Book of Jubilees*—probably second century BCE (Endres, 2000, p. 744)—the giving of the Sinai covenant was celebrated at Pentecost, and Dunn thinks it possible that Acts 2 alludes to the writing of the new Torah on the hearts of the disciples (Ezek 36:27; Jer 31:33) (Dunn, 1970, pp. 47-49).

There was no church before Pentecost. The church is a missionary body made up of witnesses to Christ, but the message of Christ's lordship (Acts 2:36; 10:36) could only be proclaimed after his ascension. Pentecost is when apostolic teaching and Christian baptism begin (Acts 2:41-42) (Dunn, 1970, pp. 49-50).

There were no Christians before Pentecost. For Dunn, water baptism and Spirit baptism are normally inseparable, so that a Christian is by definition a member of the church. Therefore, since there was no church before Pentecost there were, properly speaking, no Christians (Dunn, 1970, pp. 51, 86-87). Peter makes this clear. Speaking of Cornelius and his friends, he says, *God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 11:17). Only at Pentecost did the disciples enter into that relation with the Father made possible by Christ's death, resurrection and exaltation. Only at Pentecost did their faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ reach the level of Christian commitment (Dunn, 1970, pp. 52-53).

It should be noted, however, that Dunn is not arguing that before Pentecost the disciples were unbelievers. They were simply still under the old covenant:

Luke 10.20 has to be understood in terms of the blessings of the old covenant. To have one's name written in the book of life or in heaven was as possible under the old dispensation as the new ...

[However,] the (pre-Christian) experience of the 120 prior to Pentecost can *never* provide a pattern for the experience of new Christians now (Dunn, 1970, p. 53; italics in original).

### 1.1.3 Samaria (Acts 8:4-25)

At Pentecost, according to Dunn, the disciples become Christians when the Spirit falls. But at Samaria the text says the people believed and were baptised, but failed to receive the Spirit till some time later (Acts 8:12, 14-17). Dunn calls this the “riddle of Samaria.” Surely, if the Samaritans believed and were baptised, they must be considered Christians, yet no-one is a Christian who has not received the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9) (Dunn, 1970, p. 55).

Did the Samaritans therefore receive the Spirit twice, once when they were baptised (Acts 8:12), and again when Peter and John laid hands on them (Acts 8:17)? No, maintains Dunn (1970, p. 57), because Acts 8:16 says *for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them*. He proceeds to examine the various phrases used in Acts to describe the coming of the Spirit:

- a) baptised with the Holy Spirit (βαπτίζεσθαι ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ), 1:5; 11:16
- b) the Holy Spirit comes upon ((ἐπ)έρχομαι τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον), 1:8; 19:6
- c) filled with the Holy Spirit (πλησθῆναι πνεύματος ἁγίου), 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52<sup>4</sup>
- d) the Spirit poured out (ἐκχέειν ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος), 2:17, 18, 33; 10:45<sup>5</sup>
- e) receive the Holy Spirit (λαμβάνειν πνεῦμα ἅγιον), 2:38; 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47; 19:2
- f) gift of the Holy Spirit (δίδοναι πνεῦμα ἅγιον), 5:32; 8:18; 11:17; 15:8

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<sup>4</sup> 13:52 uses πληρώω rather than πίμπλημι.

<sup>5</sup> 10:45 uses the equivalent ἐκύνω rather than ἐκχέω (BDAG, “ἐκχέω”, para. 1, p. 312).

g) the Holy Spirit falls upon (ἐπιπίπτειν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον), 8:16; 10:44; 11:15.

Of these 27 references, Dunn says 23 refer to people's *first* recorded experience of the Spirit, not a subsequent one, and the remaining four (Acts 4:8, 31; 13:9, 52) refer to people being "filled" with the Spirit *after* Spirit baptism (e.g., Peter, 4:8) for a specific occasion only (Dunn, 1970, pp. 70-72).

At Samaria, there is no mention of the Spirit coming upon the Samaritans under Philip's ministry in verses 5-13. They received the Holy Spirit for the first and only time when Peter and John laid hands on them (Acts 8:15-17). The expressions used in verses 15-19 all support this. It was when they believed that they *received* the Holy Spirit like the converts at Pentecost (8:15, 17, 19; cf. 2:38); that the Spirit was *given* to them just as to Peter and his friends when they believed (8:18; cf. 11:17); and that the Spirit *fell upon* them just as upon Cornelius and his friends (8:16; cf. 10:44) (Dunn, 1970, pp. 57-58).

Dunn therefore concludes that the Samaritans were not truly Christians before Peter and John came down from Jerusalem. First, he says, when Philip *proclaimed the Messiah* (Acts 8:5) the Samaritans believed he was speaking about their own expected messiah, the *Taheb*. Their enthusiastic response was therefore misdirected (Dunn, 1970, p. 64). Second, the way they *listened eagerly* (προσεῖχον, 8:6) to Philip was no different from the way they had *listened ... eagerly* (προσεῖχον, 8:10) to Simon. One response was as superstitious as the other (Dunn, 1970, p. 64). Third, when verse 12 says they *believed Philip*, the construction used is πιστεύω plus the dative, which means only intellectual assent: there was still no trusting commitment. This can be seen from the example of Simon. *Simon himself believed* and was baptised (8:13), yet what followed (8:20-21)

clearly shows that his belief was not genuine (Dunn, 1970, p. 65). A final consideration is that the Samaritans knew only too well about Jewish religious and racial hostility. It was only when Peter and John came down and offered the right hand of fellowship that the Samaritans' faith could flower into full belief (Dunn, 1970, p. 67).

“In NT times the possession of the Spirit was *the* hallmark of the Christian” (Dunn, 1970, p. 66). This explains the speed with which the apostles responded. It was precisely because the Spirit, who normally came upon people at their initiation, had not yet come upon any of the Samaritans that “the two senior apostles came down hot-foot from Jerusalem to remedy a situation which had gone seriously wrong somewhere” (Dunn, 1970, p. 58).

#### **1.1.4 Saul's Conversion (Acts 9:1-19a)**

A further passage appealed to by pentecostals, says Dunn, is the story of Saul's conversion. The view he wishes to critique is that Saul was converted on the road to Damascus and baptised in the Spirit three days later. On the Damascus road he confessed Jesus to be his Lord (Acts 9:5, 22:8, 10; 26:15) and, therefore, when Ananias was sent, he greeted him as *brother Saul* (9:17) (Dunn, 1970, p. 73).

This will not do, maintains Dunn. First, κύριε, *Lord*, need be no more than a title of respect, like our “Sir” (e.g., Luke 13:8; 14:22; Acts 16:30). What Saul says is, *Who are you, Lord?* (Acts 9:5). Since he does not recognise Jesus, how can he be confessing faith in him? He is simply overcome by awe at the presence of a glorious supernatural being. Likewise, when Ananias greets Saul as *brother*, this need mean nothing more than



“fellow Israelite” (e.g., Acts 2:29, 37; 7:37; 22:5). Ananias only intends to put Saul at ease, not to declare him a Christian before he has been baptised or received the Spirit. His sins are yet to be washed away by calling on the name of Jesus (Acts 22:16) (Dunn, 1970, pp. 73-74).

Saul was commissioned through Ananias (Acts 22:14), so was his baptism in the Spirit purely a commissioning-empowerment event? Dunn thinks not. Saul was also commissioned directly by Jesus on the road to Damascus (26:15-18). Therefore, this cannot be a case of conversion followed by a later commissioning. Rather, there is a single conversion-commissioning experience which lasted three days. Saul’s time of blindness probably symbolised the process of his conversion (cf. 26:18), a time of inner turmoil and groping for the truth which ended only when his sight was restored (Dunn, 1970, pp. 75-77).

### **1.1.5 Caesarea (Acts 10:23b-48)**

Next, Dunn considers the events at the house of Cornelius. He sets out three alternative positions taken by pentecostals. First, *Cornelius* (we assume Dunn includes his friends) *was born again before Peter preached to him*. This does not stand up, Dunn insists: Cornelius was told to send for Peter because *he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved* (Acts 11:14). Cornelius may have met the standards of Jewish piety (10:2) and been acceptable to God (10:4, 35), but to become a Christian and enter the new epoch, what was required was faith in Christ and the gift of the Spirit (Dunn, 1970, pp. 79-80).

A second view is that *Cornelius came to faith during Peter's sermon, and the gift of the Spirit followed as a distinct act of grace*. A third is that *even though Cornelius' faith and the gift of the Spirit happened together, they remained distinct acts of grace*. Dunn argues that neither of these views fits the context. The Spirit falls while Peter is speaking about forgiveness (Acts 10:43-44): he has said nothing about the gift of the Spirit. The natural implication is that Cornelius sought forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit came as the bearer of that forgiveness—not instead of it, and not as a quite unrelated blessing (Dunn, 1970, p. 80).

Dunn claims further evidence in Acts 15:7-9. God, Peter tells his hearers, bore witness that Cornelius and his friends have become believers by *giving them the Holy Spirit and cleansing their hearts by faith* (15:8-9). These two phrases, Dunn maintains, are synonymous descriptions of the same conversion-initiation event (Dunn, 1970, pp. 81-82). In a later article he elaborates as follows:

The Greek syntax can be understood either in terms of chronological sequence, or of complementary/synonymous description. ... Had v. 9 preceded v. 8, my critics would no doubt have argued that the cleansing of the heart preceded the gift of the Spirit. But given the order of the verses, it is highly unlikely that Luke meant that the cleansing of the heart by faith was subsequent to the giving of the Spirit. The only obvious alternative is that vv. 8 and 9 are synonymous or complementary (Dunn, 1993, p. 15).

### **1.1.6 Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7)**

Turning, finally, to Paul's meeting with the disciples at Ephesus, Dunn (1970, p. 83) sets out three propositions which, if established, would constitute a strong case for the pentecostal view of Spirit baptism.

- a) The Ephesian disciples were Christians before Paul met them, hence they are called μαθηταί, *disciples* and πιστεύσαντες, lit. (*ones*) *having believed* (Acts 19:1-2).
- b) Paul's question in verse 2, "*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*" means that for Paul it was possible to be a Christian without yet having received the Spirit.
- c) There was a lapse of time between their conversion (which preceded their baptism, 19:5-6), and the coming of the Spirit (which followed Paul's laying on of hands, 19:7).

Regarding the first claim, Dunn replies that, whatever his initial assumption, Paul soon realised the Ephesian disciples were not Christians. They were ignorant of the Holy Spirit, and he did not accept their previous baptism as sufficient. While it might be true that in Acts μαθηταί usually means "Christians," Acts 19:1 is unique: it is the only time μαθηταί is not preceded by the article. Dunn argues that in Acts οἱ μαθηταί (with the article) is almost a technical term, referring to the whole Christian community in a certain place (e.g., Acts 6:7; 9:19, 38), or else to a clearly identified group from among them (9:25; 21:16). His view is that Luke describes the disciples at Ephesus as *τινας μαθητάς*, *some disciples* to indicate they were not among οἱ μαθηταί—the local Christian

community. Here was something anomalous: *some* disciples at Ephesus who did not belong to *the* disciples at Ephesus (Dunn, 1970, pp. 83-84, 86).

In regard to the second claim, Dunn thinks Paul's query in Acts 19:2, "*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*" is a test question. He later gives the following paraphrase: "You say you are believers, but did you receive the Holy Spirit when you made this commitment you speak of?" (Dunn, 1979, p. 179). If the Ephesian disciples had made a commitment of faith, they would have received the Holy Spirit. And his follow-up query in verse 3, "*Into what then were you baptized?*" shows he believed that the Holy Spirit was received in connection with baptism. The absence of the Spirit meant that these disciples had not even begun the Christian life. Baptism "was the necessary expression of commitment, without which they could not be said to have truly 'believed'" (Dunn, 1970, p. 86).

Before Dunn wrote in 1970, Ervin had given his own paraphrase of Paul's question in Acts 19:2: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit in 'Pentecostal' fullness subsequent to your conversion?" (Ervin, 1968, pp. 102-103, footnote 47). In the same footnote he had argued that πιστεύσαντες, *when you believed*, in 19:2 can equally be translated *after you believed*. He cited Robertson's *Grammar of the Greek New Testament* to illustrate this usage. Robertson (1919, pp. 1113-1114) gave the example of Acts 10:29, ἦλθον μεταπεμφθείς, lit. *being sent for, I came*. Here, the coming happened *after* the being sent for. Dunn, however, responds by citing other examples of the aorist participle where the action is coincident with the main verb, such as Acts 10:33, καλῶς ἐποίησας παραγενόμενος, lit. *you did well, having come* (Dunn, 1970, pp. 86-87).

As to the third claim about a lapse of time between conversion and receiving the Spirit, Dunn points out that, when Paul learned that these disciples had not received the Spirit, he asked about their *baptism*—not about a later ritual such as laying on of hands (Dunn, 1970, p. 87). Baptism and the laying on of hands should be viewed not as separate procedures but as steps within a single ritual, where the central element is baptism and the object is receiving the Spirit:

This is borne out by the form of vv. 5f., which could be translated, “... they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and, Paul having laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them.” The laying on of hands is almost parenthetical; the sequence of events is ‘baptism (resulting in) ... Spirit’. Certainly, the one action leads into and reached its conclusion in the other with no discernible break (Dunn, 1970, p. 87).

Apollos in the previous chapter was in a similar position. He *knew only the baptism of John* (Acts 18:25) and needed further instruction (18:26). But he was not rebaptised because he already possessed the Spirit (ζέων τῷ πνεύματι, 18:25), while the group of disciples in Acts 19 did not (Dunn, 1970, p. 88).

In summary, Dunn maintains that the Ephesian disciples became Christians when and only when they were filled with the Holy Spirit—part of a single conversion-initiation event which included their baptism in water. This conclusion is consistent with his assessment of each of the four previous references to Spirit baptism in Acts. The 120 disciples became Christians only at Pentecost. Only at Pentecost did their faith in Jesus as the ascended Lord reach the level of Christian commitment (Dunn, 1970, pp. 50, 52). The

Samaritans' initial "faith" was grounded in superstition and their expectation of their own *Taheb*, and was centred on Philip rather than on Christ. Not until Peter and John came down and offered the right hand of fellowship could they be certain of their acceptance by the Jewish believers, and only then did they come to full faith in Christ (Dunn, 1970, pp. 64-65, 67). Saul's conversion was a three-day process which began on the road to Damascus but was not completed till Ananias came, and Saul called on the name of Jesus, was baptised, and was filled with the Holy Spirit (Dunn, 1970, pp. 77-78). Cornelius and his friends became Christians when the Spirit fell upon them as Peter preached faith in Christ and forgiveness, that is, when they believed (Dunn, 1970, p. 80). In none of these five instances—in none of the 23 relevant phrases used to describe Spirit baptism—does Luke record any previous coming of the Spirit. Each of these events is an instance of conversion-initiation (Dunn, 1970, pp. 70-72).

## **1.2 Responses to Dunn**

Dunn's provocative thesis, directed as it is at the most distinctive aspect of pentecostal theology (Dunn, 1970, pp. viii, 4), has stimulated responses from a number of scholars, mostly pentecostal. This section will outline some of those responses.

### **1.2.1 *Jesus at the Jordan***

Some of Dunn's critics take issue with the "three-epoch" view of salvation history. According to Conzelmann (1960, p. 26) and Dunn (1970, p. 25), Luke 16:16a, *The law and the prophets were in effect until John came, since then the good news of the kingdom*

*of God is proclaimed*, shows that Luke assigns John the Baptist to the first epoch. Shelton (1991, pp. 167-169) finds this inconclusive because:

- a) *μέχρι* (*until*) need not be punctiliar and therefore need not isolate John in the old epoch (he cites the use of *μέχρι* in the phrase *until the harvest* in some variant manuscripts of Matthew 13:30);
- b) *από* (*since*) can indicate the point of time from which something begins, whether literally or figuratively (see BDAG, “*από*”, 2.b.α, p. 105<sup>6</sup>) without implying separation and a cut-off;
- c) *ἀπὸ τότε* (*since then*) can be used to introduce a subsequent situation without specifying a definite time, so “thereafter” as distinct from “from that time on” (BDF, 459, (2) with (3), p. 240).

These considerations, he says, make it tendentious to isolate John and Jesus in separate epochs, and then claim that Jesus’ anointing was the inauguration of the new age. Luke does not neatly place the ministries of John and Jesus in different epochs. At times John is linked with Jesus: his baptism is acceptable for signifying the forgiveness of sin (Luke 3:3). At other times (e.g., Peter’s confession of Christ, 9:18-20) he is grouped with the old prophets while Jesus is set apart (Shelton, 1991, p. 170).

Dunn (1970, pp. 31-32) contends that one indication that Luke 1 and 2 belong to the first epoch is that in those chapters the Spirit “is pre-eminently the Spirit of prophecy” (not, as later, the one who initiates believers into the new covenant). Shelton (1991, pp. 170-171)

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<sup>6</sup> Shelton cites pp. 86-87 of the earlier second edition: the same point is made here in the third edition.

responds that the Spirit's role is prophetic in Luke-Acts as a whole. The work of the Spirit is focused on inspired speech also in the ministry of Jesus and in the witness of the believers after Pentecost. And if the infancy narrative is dominated by Old Testament allusions, so is Jesus' inaugural address at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-27).

Like Shelton, Menzies (1994a, pp. 119, 226) rejects Conzelmann's three-epoch scheme of salvation history. His critique is directed at Tatum, but it also has implications for Dunn. Tatum argues that in the first epoch John, Elizabeth and Zechariah (1:15, 41, 67) are *filled* with the Spirit (passive forms of πληρόω are used), but in the second epoch Jesus is *full* (πλήρης) of the Spirit (4:1), a term which implies "a more permanent connection" (Tatum, 1967, pp. 189-191). In this epoch Jesus alone bears what Tatum calls the "messianic Spirit," who remains permanently with him. In the third epoch, the epoch of the church, the Spirit once again acts as the Spirit of prophecy. But in this epoch every believer receives the Spirit, not only (as in the first epoch) a few select individuals (Tatum, 1967, p. 191).

Menzies is unconvinced by Tatum's conclusion that the outburst of prophecy in Luke 1–2 restricts the nativity stories to Conzelmann's first, Old Testament epoch:

Tatum ignores the fact that the renewed activity of the prophetic Spirit, once prominent in the past history of Israel, is itself an indicator of the dawning of the messianic age. ... Only by ignoring the eschatological significance of the restoration of the gift of the Spirit and the prophecy which it produces can Tatum attempt to separate Luke 1–2 from the rest of Luke-Acts (Menzies, 1994a, p. 120).



The limitation of the Spirit to Jesus during his ministry, says Menzies, does not demonstrate that the *function* of the Spirit has changed. Jesus still acts as a prophet, bringing special revelation and inspired speech. And in the third epoch, if the Spirit is once more the Spirit who fills prophets intermittently, why are Stephen, Barnabas and others said to be *πλήρης πνεύματος*, *full of the Spirit* (Acts 6:3, 5; 11:24)? (Menzies, 1994a, pp. 120-121). Rather than three distinct epochs, he concludes, Luke's pneumatology supports a single story of fulfilment in which the Spirit functions constantly as the Spirit of prophecy (Menzies, 1994a, pp. 121, 256).

Atkinson also rejects Dunn's three-epoch view, though he stresses the uniqueness of the events at the Jordan:

Luke does not present Jesus' anointing as a mere "sub-unit" of the new age. This was the unique anointing of the unique Son for a unique purpose; not just to announce forgiveness and release—many prophets before Jesus had done that—but now actually to deliver forgiveness and release (Atkinson, 2011, p. 45).

Dunn is quite wrong, however, to see [the anointing at the Jordan] as somehow ushering Jesus into the new covenant. This idea is far from Luke's concepts: Luke offers no suggestion that Jesus even *needed* to be *ushered* into the new covenant. Jesus' explanation will suffice: he was anointed for public liberating ministries (Luke 4:18-21). Luke viewed this anointing on Jesus as in key ways unique, but still, in part, a pattern for the later Spirit reception that his followers would experience. To this extent, their later reception of the Spirit would not usher them, either, into the new covenant, but rather empower them to follow Jesus' example

in fulfilling God's mission to the nations (Atkinson, 2011, p. 124; italics in original).

Menzies denies that Luke ever attributes conversion-initiation functions to the Spirit (Menzies, 1994a, p. 227; cf. Menzies, 1994b, p. 117). With this in mind, he translates Luke 3:21 so as to separate Jesus' anointing with the Spirit from his baptism:

In view of the change of tenses in the participles (aorist participle: βαπτισθέντος; present participle: προσευχομένου) my translation reads: "After all the people and Jesus had been baptized, while he was praying ..." (Menzies, 1994a, p. 134, footnote 2).

Dunn later responds to these arguments. He accepts the force of the case against a sharp division between the first epoch with John and the second epoch with Jesus. He remains convinced, however, that the coming of the Spirit at the Jordan inaugurates a new stage in God's purposes. Jesus' anointing marks the start of the new age foreshadowed in Isaiah (Luke 4:18-21; cf. Acts 10:38). The power (Spirit) of God active through him demonstrates that the eschatological kingdom is now present and active (Luke 11:20) (Dunn, 1993, pp. 17-18). In other words, Dunn continues to maintain that Jesus' anointing by the Spirit has an initiating function.

### **1.2.2 Pentecost**

Scholars responding to Dunn's interpretation of Pentecost have again focused on his use of the three-epoch scheme of salvation history. They have also addressed his

interpretation of “the promise” in Acts 2:39, and his understanding of when the 120 became believers.

### *The epochs*

Turner (who takes a modified conversion-initiation position, Turner, 1999, p. xii) directs his critique at Dunn’s view that *the last days* in Acts 2:17 refer to the church epoch which begins at Pentecost. In Turner’s view Pentecost is *part* of the promised end-time of salvation, but not its beginning. There might be successive phases of God’s inbreaking, but this is a process which begins with Luke 1–2 (Turner, 2000, pp. 163, 353).

The *portents* (τέρατα) *in the heaven above and signs* (σημεῖα) *on the earth below* (Acts 2:19) find “resonances” in the life and death of Jesus. His ministry also is characterised by τέρατα and σημεῖα (verse 22). At the crucifixion the heavenly wonder of the darkened sun is followed immediately by the rending of the curtain in the earthly Temple (Luke 23:45; cf. Acts 2:20a). Admittedly, Turner considers the connection “more allusive than exegetical, for Jesus’ ‘wonders’ are on earth,” but the allusion still places “a measure of eschatological fulfilment in Jesus’ ministry and death” (Turner, 2000, p. 273).

### *The promise*

Dunn argues that the promise (ἡ ἐπαγγελία) of Acts 2:39 refers to the promise of the new covenant, and he maintains that the phrase “baptism in the Spirit” is never directly connected to the promise of power (Dunn, 1970, pp. 47, 54). Menzies (1994a, p. 171) responds that *the promise of the Father* (Acts 1:4) is received at Pentecost, and Peter interprets Pentecost as the fulfilment of Joel 2:28-32a, which is a promise of prophecy empowered by the Spirit. In other words, baptism in the Spirit fulfils both the promise of

the Father and the promise of power. Petts (1987, pp. 50-51) points out that Luke 24:49 identifies the Father's promise with *power from on high*; that Acts 1:4-5 identifies the Father's promise with Spirit baptism; and that Acts 1:8 links the Spirit's coming with power to witness. Taken together, says Petts, these texts establish a very clear connection between baptism in the Spirit and empowerment for witness.

### *Empowerment versus initial experience*

If, as pentecostals argue, Spirit baptism is to empower for witness, were those in Acts 2 already converted when the Spirit came upon them? Ervin (1984, p. 1) thinks so. He maintains that if Acts 2:18<sup>7</sup> is to be believed, those who were baptised in the Spirit at Pentecost were already Yahweh's "menservants and maidservants." Similarly, Shelton writes:

It seems incredible that Luke would present the disciples as witnesses to Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension; as recipients of his commission ([Luke] 24:47-49) and blessing (24:51); as joyful ... united ... and devoted to prayer ([Acts] 1:14); and yet not see them as converted (Shelton, 1991, p. 128).

Dunn's claim that Spirit baptism is tightly linked to Christian initiation is also disputed, this time by Menzies, who among other passages cites the events at Samaria in Acts 8:12-17 (Menzies, 1994a, pp. 203-204). To these events we now turn.

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<sup>7</sup> Ervin incorrectly cites Acts 2:17.

### **1.2.3 Samaria**

Stronstad finds Dunn's explanation of the events at Samaria "contrived." For him it is evident that the Samaritans believed and were baptised, but did not receive the Spirit until later. Such a separation in time, he considers, is in fact typical of Spirit baptism in Acts, though the experience *may* be concurrent with conversion. Spirit baptism follows conversion *logically*; it need not always follow chronologically. Seen in this light, the events at Samaria cease to be a "riddle." There is no theological inconsistency or contradiction (Stronstad, 2012, pp. 72-73).

Menzies, too, finds Dunn's exegesis unconvincing. Philip's message could not have been misunderstood, since Peter and John did nothing to correct it. Furthermore, Luke is not disparaging the eager response of the Samaritans to Philip's preaching: rather he is underlining Simon's grip on the people and therefore Philip's resounding triumph (Menzies, 1994a, pp. 208-209).

Ervin applies the microscope to Dunn's claim that the Samaritans' belief was only intellectual assent (Acts 8:12). Dunn states:

when πιστεύειν governs a dative object (except perhaps κύριος or θεός) it signifies intellectual assent to a statement or proposition, rather than commitment to God ([Acts] 24.14; 26.27). This use of πιστεύειν, unique in Acts, can surely be no accident on Luke's part (Dunn, 1970, p. 65).

For the distinction he makes, Dunn appeals to Arndt & Gingrich (see AG “πιστεύω”, 1.a.δ and 1.b, p. 666 = BDAG, “πιστεύω”, 1.a.δ and 1.b, pp. 816-817). We can set out what Arndt & Gingrich say as follows concerning this verb:

1: “to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one’s trust, *believe*.”

1.a.δ: “*believe (in) something, be convinced of something*, with that which one believes (in) indicated by means of the dative of [the] thing *give[n] credence to, believe[d]*.”

1.b: as 1, “with the person to whom one *gives credence* or whom one *believes*, in the dative.”

In other words, 1.a.δ deals with things believed/trusted and 1.b with persons. Arndt & Gingrich cite Acts 24:14 under 1.a.δ, and 8:12 and 26:27 under 1.b.

Ervin is unconvinced by this attempt of Dunn to erect a grammatical rule separating intellectual assent from trust and commitment. First, he notes that Arndt and Gingrich also list in 1.b examples from the Gospels where assent and commitment may quite reasonably go together (e.g., Matt 21:25; John 5:46) (Ervin, 1984, p. 28).

Second, in Acts 27:25 Paul surely affirms both credence and trust in God in spite of πιστεύω having a dative object: *So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God* (πιστεύω γὰρ τῷ θεῷ) *that it will be exactly as I have been told* (Ervin, 1984, p. 28).

Dunn does add a qualifier to his rule: “except perhaps κύριος or θεός,” which, if correct, might allow for Acts 27:25, but Ervin is left wondering why Dunn violates his own exception by concluding that the Philippian jailer (πεπιστευκῶς τῷ θεῷ, Acts 16:34) and

Crispus (ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ, Acts 18:8) are examples of mere intellectual assent (Dunn, 1970, p. 65, footnote 38) (Ervin, 1984, p. 28).

Third, Ervin addresses Acts 24:14 and 26:27, the two verses cited by Dunn in the above quote. He argues that Acts 24.14 (πιστεύων πᾶσι τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς προφήταις γεγραμμένοις, *believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets*) hardly establishes that Paul gave merely intellectual assent to the law and the prophets. King Agrippa's belief in the prophets (Acts 26:27) might indeed have been only intellectual, but the Samaritans' response to the gospel was so different from Agrippa's that the two are not commensurable (Ervin, 1984, pp. 28-29).

A separate issue raised by Ervin (1987, pp. 72-73) is that Peter and John did not repeat the baptism of the Samaritan converts. The implication is that, unlike Paul with the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:3-5), they were satisfied that the Samaritans had become believers through Philip's preaching.

Turner offers a number of criticisms:

1. It is unlikely Luke thought Philip's preaching in 8:6 was either defective or misunderstood. There is no evidence that Luke's readers, or Luke himself, knew about Samaritan expectations of the *Taheb*. Nor is it enough to say that "ὁ χριστός *simpliciter*" in Acts always means "the Messiah of pre-Christian expectation" (Dunn, 1970, p. 64). If Philip *proclaimed the Messiah* (ἐκήρυσσεν ... τὸν Χριστόν, Acts 8:5), so did the apostles (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, Acts 5:42; cf. also 9:22; 18:5; 18:28). Such expressions are meant to bring out not

the pre-Christian understanding of the audience, but the delivery of the normal Christian message, cf. 8:12 (Turner, 2000, p. 363).

2. It is unlikely the Samaritans' conversion was superficial and based on the signs performed by Philip. Luke does not deprecate faith confirmed by signs (Acts 2:43 with 47; 4:29-30; 14:3), and in both 8:6 and 8:12 the response of the Samaritans is attributed to the message heard and only secondarily to signs. In reality Simon is being contrasted with Philip (and later Peter) to show that Christianity transcends magic and has a different motivation (Turner, 2000, p. 364).
3. The claim that the Samaritans' belief was only mental assent and directed to Philip rather than Christ, Turner considers "at best oversubtle" (Turner, 2000, p. 365). To give heed (προσέχω, Acts 8:6) to an evangelist is to hear God who speaks through him (cf. Acts 16:14) (Turner, 2000, p. 364).
4. Since the Samaritans genuinely believed, they were adequately prepared for baptism, and this baptism was administered *in the name of the Lord Jesus* (Acts 8:16), Luke's normal formula in Acts (2:38; 10:48).
5. The apostles heard that Samaria *had accepted the word of God* (δέδεκται ... τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, Acts 8:14), and Luke gives no indication that this report was incorrect. Acts 11:1 uses the same phrase (ἔδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) to describe the clearly genuine conversion of the Gentiles, cf. 11:18 (Turner, 2000, p. 365).
6. It is unlikely that the Samaritans' response to the gospel was being hindered by their awareness of Jewish animosity (Dunn, 1970, p. 67). There is no sign of such hesitation by either the Ethiopian eunuch or even the Gentiles at Caesarea. The idea that the apostles' laying on of hands was primarily a sign of reconciliation is unlikely in view of Paul's actions in 19:6. In any event the laying on of hands



followed prayer for the Spirit and was therefore (as Simon rightly concluded) primarily to impart it (Turner, 2000, p. 365).

7. It is unlikely that Luke believed Simon Magus was a false convert. Serious sin following conversion was not unknown in the Church (Acts 5:1-11). Nor is it self-evident that Simon himself had not received the Spirit simply because he saw others receiving it. When Peter said, “*You have no part or share in this*” (Acts 8:21) he is referring to authority to bestow the Spirit. There is no reason to doubt the “natural force” of Luke’s statement in 8:13 that Simon too believed and was baptised (Turner, 2000, pp. 366-367).

#### **1.2.4 Saul’s Conversion**

Was Saul’s Spirit baptism concurrent with or subsequent to his conversion? Ervin is unconvinced by Dunn’s argument that Saul meant no more than “Sir” when he addressed Jesus as κύριε, *Lord* (Acts 9:5). Saul might not have known who Jesus was in Acts 9:5 and 22:8, says Ervin, but he certainly did when he used κύριε in 22:10. In any event “Sir” is quite inadequate to express a human reaction in the presence of a theophany, cf. Rev 22:8 (Ervin, 1984, p. 43; p. 50, footnote 8).

Shelton draws attention to Acts 9:17. Here Ananias tells Saul that he has been sent so that Saul *might be filled with the Holy Spirit*. Elsewhere in Luke-Acts filling with the Holy Spirit leads to inspired witness. This is the case in Luke 1–2 with Mary, Elizabeth, John, Zechariah, Simeon and Anna, and in Acts in such passages as 1:8; 2:4-11; 4:8, 29-31 (Shelton, 1991, pp. 26, 120, 131). So, is this an exceptional case where the phrase describes conversion? Probably not, thinks Shelton, because immediately afterwards Saul

begins just such a prophetic witness in the synagogues of Damascus, fulfilling the commission assigned to him in verse 15. Even if *filled with the Holy Spirit* refers to conversion (which Shelton finds doubtful), empowerment cannot be excluded as a further consequence, given “the dominant use of the fullness of the Spirit in relation to speaking in Luke’s writings” (Shelton, 1991, pp. 131, 141).

Dunn, responding to Shelton and others, replies that he does not exclude prophetic witness:

Let it be said at once that the positive part of these theses is in my view entirely correct. The Spirit for Luke is indeed pre-eminently the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit that inspires speech and witness. ...

[However,] is there any justification in the text for the further deduction that Luke intends to *limit* the effect of the Spirit in a life to such inspired speech, to “prophecy” as distinct from “salvation”? (Dunn, 1993, pp. 8-10).

Menzies (1994a, p. 214) takes into account the separate report of Ananias’ visit to Saul in Acts 22:12-16. According to Menzies, this reads like Saul’s commissioning as a missionary, not the culmination of his conversion. In Acts 26:12-18 the commission is given by Jesus himself which, says Menzies, “confirms my contention that Paul’s missionary call was foremost in Luke’s mind.” He believes that Acts 9:17 and 20, taken together, imply that Saul was both healed and commissioned when Ananias laid hands on him.

### **1.2.5 Caesarea**

Ervin does not think Cornelius and his friends received Spirit baptism as part of their conversion. He appeals to Acts 11:15-17 where Peter says that *the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning ... God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ* (NASB). Since the disciples were believers before Pentecost, what happened to the new believers at Caesarea must be understood in the same way, as empowerment for mission subsequent to conversion (Ervin, 1984, p. 52).

A limitation of this line of argument is that the participial phrase ἡμῶν πιστεύσασιν may be translated as either *us ... after believing* (NASB) or *when we believed* (NRSV). As Petts remarks:

Of course, it is possible to argue from precisely the same verse to an entirely different conclusion. Clearly if [baptism in the Holy Spirit] is seen as conversion at Pentecost it will be seen as conversion at Caesarea. If it is seen as enduement with power at Pentecost, it will be seen as enduement with power at Caesarea (Petts, 1987, p. 71).

Stronstad is convinced that Cornelius and his friends were already converted before Peter arrived. He provides the following chart to summarise the spiritual state of Cornelius before he was baptised in the Spirit.

**Table 1. The Spiritual State of Cornelius (Stronstad)**

Luke describes Cornelius as (10.2–3)	Cornelius' messengers describe Cornelius as (10.22)	Peter acknowledges Cornelius' knowledge (10.34–38)
A devout man A God-fearer An alms-giver A receiver of visions	A righteous/justified man A God-fearer A man well-spoken of by the Jews	About John's baptism About Jesus of Nazareth About Jesus being anointed by the Spirit About Jesus' charismatic ministry

– Stronstad, 2010b, section “The Antecedent State of Cornelius and His Household”, para. 1.

Cornelius himself is righteous and well-spoken of by the Jews (Acts 10:22). His household are God-fearers (10:2) and one of his soldiers is devout (10:7). Together with his relatives and close friends (10:24) they evidently constitute a house church. They know (ὁμεῖς οἴδατε, 10:37) about Jesus' anointing with the Spirit, and their faith is focused on his charismatic ministry, death and resurrection. It is this Christian, believing community that was baptised with the Holy Spirit (Stronstad, 2012, pp. 74-75).

Petts (1987, p. 70) does not accept this line of argument which, he says, Dunn quite rightly rejects on the grounds of Acts 11:14. However, he disagrees when Dunn goes on to say that since

the Spirit fell on Cornelius ... while Peter was speaking of the forgiveness of sins ... the natural implication is that Cornelius at that moment reached out in faith to God for *forgiveness* and received, as God's response, the *Holy Spirit* ... not instead of the promised forgiveness but as the bearer of it (Dunn, 1970, p. 80; italics in original).

To Petts the natural implication is that when Cornelius reached out in faith he received forgiveness *together with* the Holy Spirit. This is because “the evidence of the Spirit’s coming is described by Luke as glossolalia (Acts 10:46) which is nowhere in the NT seen as evidence of forgiveness” (Petts, 1987, p. 70). Spirit baptism serves a different purpose from regeneration and has a different, supernatural manifestation. “It may thus occur after regeneration—indeed most Pentecostals would argue that it *usually* does—but it certainly should not be taken as essentially subsequent to it” (Petts, 1987, p. 21; italics in original).

Turner is not convinced by Dunn’s proposal that in Acts 15:8-9 *giving them the Holy Spirit* describes the same action as *cleansing their hearts by faith* (Dunn, 1970, p. 81). This is because *cleansing their hearts by faith* does not function to clarify *giving them the Holy Spirit*, but to provide the grounds for what follows (hence οὖν, *therefore*, at the start of verse 10). Peter is arguing that since God had cleansed the hearts of the Gentiles without circumcision and Torah-commitment, there is no ground for bringing them under the Mosaic law (Turner, 2000, p. 383). Nevertheless:

While ... we found no semantic *structural* grounds for identifying [Acts] 15.8b with 15.9b, 11.16 provides an important *conceptual* clue that suggests Dunn’s reading was actually along the right lines: the Spirit of prophecy is simultaneously the soteriological Spirit in so far as it is the power of Zion’s cleansing/restoration (Turner, 2000, p. 387).

To summarise: Ervin and Stronstad argue that at Caesarea Spirit baptism follows conversion; Petts (1987, pp. 69-70) maintains that they are simultaneous but distinct; and Turner believes that Spirit baptism brings both salvation and empowerment.

### **1.2.6 Ephesus**

We saw in subsection 1.1.6 that Dunn maintains that the disciples (τινας μαθητάς) encountered by Paul in Acts 19:1 were not Christians, but a group who did not belong to οἱ μαθηταί, “the disciples” of the local Christian community. If at first Paul thought they were Christians, he was soon disabused.

Ervin considers this distinction plausible at best and fanciful at worst. He argues that at the start of Acts 19 there is no clear evidence of any settled congregation in Ephesus, only of a few individuals who, like Paul, were still at the stage of witnessing in the synagogue (Acts 18:19, 24-26; cf. 19:8). Elsewhere in Acts Ananias, who is clearly a Christian, is called τις μαθητῆς (9:10). Tabitha, who is one of οἱ μαθηταί at Joppa (9:38), is nevertheless called τις μαθήτρια in Acts 9:36 (Ervin, 1984, pp. 56-57, 59). Shelton (1991, p. 150, footnote 23) asks why, if Paul at first mistook the Ephesian disciples for Christians, Luke lets his readers make the same mistake. He could have said that they were *supposed* disciples.

Ervin (unlike Shelton) is not concerned to argue that the Ephesian disciples were already Christians before Paul met them. For him, what matters is their status “*after* they were baptized and *before* Paul laid his hands upon them to receive the Holy Spirit” (Ervin, 1984, p. 58; italics in original). His disagreement with Dunn therefore centres on Acts

19:5-6. Here, as discussed in subsection 1.1.6, Dunn (1970, p. 87) sees one single action, water baptism resulting in baptism in the Spirit, while the laying on of hands is “almost parenthetical.” Ervin rejects this analysis. First, he says, καὶ at the start of verse 6 makes the rest of the sentence paratactic rather than subordinate to *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*. Second, ἐπιθέντος ... τοῦ Παύλου is a genitive absolute which most English versions treat as expressing time: “*when Paul laid hands upon them*.” In other words, καὶ ἐπιθέντος αὐτοῖς τοῦ Παύλου χειρᾶς ἦλθεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ’ αὐτούς, *and when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them*, expresses a co-ordinate and subsequent action. Thus there are two distinct events—water baptism and Spirit baptism—not one (Ervin, 1984, p. 65).

Dunn considers that Apollos, even though he knew only the baptism of John, already possessed the Spirit (Acts 18:25) and therefore did not need to be rebaptised (Dunn, 1970, p. 88). Ervin responds that the text says Apollos knew only John’s baptism, not baptism in the name of Jesus. His preaching was only *eloquent and well-versed in the scriptures* (Acts 18:24), not, like Paul’s, with *signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit* (Rom 15:19). There is no consensus, he insists, that ζέων τῷ πνεύματι (Acts 18:25) means more than “*fervent in (human) spirit*,” and Dunn fails to explain why John’s baptism qualified someone to receive the Spirit. It may well be that the instruction Apollos received from Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:26) was about water and Spirit baptism, and that Apollos was in fact rebaptised (Ervin, 1984, pp. 60-61).

The central point at issue between Dunn and his dialogue partners, as already noted, is whether Spirit baptism is to be understood as a conversion-initiation event, or an event of commissioning and empowerment separate from and (at least logically) subsequent to

conversion. In chapter 2 we will consider a different approach to the five key passages and address this issue in the light of our findings.



## **Chapter 2. Inaugural and Subsequent Spirit Baptism**

### **2.1 The Temple and the Spirit**

Pentecost marks a new beginning in several respects. It is the beginning of the church's life and growth under the leadership of the apostles. Some scholars (e.g., Talbert, 2005, p. 27) have also seen it as a new Sinai, the inauguration of a new covenant. Others (e.g., Gempf, 1994, p. 1070) see in Acts 2 a reversal of the events at the Tower of Babel. Such interpretations need not be mutually exclusive. Turner (2000, p. 352) helpfully compares Luke to an impressionistic artist. The impressionists often portrayed their subject by overall visual effects rather than exact details: broken dabs rather than continuous lines; pure colours rather than graduated shades pre-mixed on the palette. Luke's similar, allusive approach allows him to create a rich tapestry with multiple strands of reference, though it also makes greater demands on the interpreter's judgment. This section will seek to pursue one such strand.

A theophany somewhat similar to Sinai occurs at the dedication of the Tabernacle. The cloud of God's presence comes down upon the tent, and the glory of YHWH fills it (Ex 40:34-35). Similar events happen when Solomon's Temple is dedicated. The cloud and glory come down, fire descends on the sacrifices, and the people glorify God (1 Kgs 8:10-13; 2 Chr 7:1-3) (Greene, 2012, pp. 719-720). Clearly enough, what happens at Pentecost has some similarities to these dedications. But is there enough evidence to conclude that Luke intends to allude to these events?

If there is such an allusion, why is God’s presence at Pentecost described in terms of “Spirit” rather than “cloud” or “glory”? The idea of the temple of the Spirit occurs elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:20-22), but nowhere in the Old Testament is the Spirit spoken of as indwelling the Temple (Greene, 2012, p. 717). So, how did the change in usage come about?

Even in the Old Testament God was never restricted to the Temple (1 Kgs 8:27).

According to Greene (2012, pp. 720-721), “cloud” and “glory” expressed *God’s local presence in the sanctuary*, but “Spirit” was used to express *God’s presence outside the sanctuary among the people* (Isa 63:14; Hag 2:4-5; Neh 9:20). As well as this general presence among the people, the Spirit came upon particular individuals, so “Spirit” also expressed *God’s commissioning or empowering presence in individuals*, equipping them for specific tasks, either temporary or long-term (2 Chr 20:14-15; Ex 31:1-5; 1 Sam 16:13) (Levison, 2007, sect. A.2, paras 1, 4, 9).

However, the destruction of the Temple and the Babylonian exile brought about a gradual shift in perspective (Greene, 2012, p. 718). For example, in Ezekiel 11:16 God’s presence is described as a *sanctuary* for the scattered exiles, far from the Temple *in the countries where they have gone*. By the first century CE “Spirit” is being used of God’s presence in the Temple itself. In Josephus’ *Antiquities* (8.114; cf. Greene, 2012, p. 730) the cloud descends on the Temple at its dedication, and Solomon prays, ἱκετεύω καὶ μοῖραν τινα τοῦ σοῦ πνεύματος εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἀποκίσειν, *I also entreat that some portion of your Spirit may come down (lit. be removed, carried away) into this Temple*.

A related shift in thought is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. According to Flusser, the sectarians who followed the *Community Rule* (first century BCE)<sup>8</sup> thought of themselves allegorically as a temple in *Rule, IX, 5-6*:

A comparison of the sect with the Temple follows immediately: “At this time the men of the Community shall separate a House of Holiness for Aaron to unite themselves as a Holy of Holies, and a House of community for Israel who walk in perfection.” ... Both the context and the insistence that the “House” shall be formed by “separation” clearly show that no material temple is intended (Flusser, 1988, pp. 38-39).

The ideas of a temple indwelt by the Spirit of God and of a spiritual temple constituted by faithful believers were therefore not unknown among Jews in the first century. Whether Luke shared such ideas remains to be demonstrated.

### **2.1.1 The Dedication of the Temple and Pentecost**

When Solomon’s Temple was dedicated, the cloud of God’s presence and the glory of the LORD filled the Temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11). Gwaltney and Vunderink distinguish these terms as follows:

The Pentateuch associates God’s glory (i.e., his aura, the sheer magnificence of God’s presence) with theophanies, acts of salvation, and judgment. The glory is a devouring fire, shrouded with clouds on Mt. Sinai (Exod. 24:16-17). In clouds and

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<sup>8</sup> See “The Community Rule” (n.d.). The previous name, *The Manual of Discipline*, is used by Flusser.

fire God’s glory accompanied Israel through the wilderness (cf. Exod. 13:21), filled the tabernacle (40:34–38) and the temple (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:10-11; 2 Chr. 7:1-3), and sanctified the beginning of the cultic service (Lev. 9:23) (Gwaltney and Vunderink, 2000, p. 507).

Brueggemann, commenting on the dedication of the Tabernacle in Ex 40:34-35, elaborates further:

The “cloud” ... is a standard device to signify presence and at the same time to keep God hidden, remote, and inaccessible. The cloud “covers”—i.e., surrounds—the tabernacle and “settles” (*šākan*) upon the tent of meeting. The “glory,” in contrast, is a bright light that is nearly physical in its power and appearance. It “fills” the tabernacle, so forcefully that even Moses cannot enter the place (Brueggemann, 2008, p. 978).

The function of the cloud, in other words, is to reveal the fact of God’s presence while at the same time keeping God’s overwhelming presence hidden (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:12). The glory of the LORD, on the other hand, is a fiery, brilliant light which makes God’s presence manifest. In view of this there is a noteworthy correspondence between the Spirit’s coming in Acts and the dedication of Solomon’s Temple:

1 Kgs 8:10-11. And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD (ἡ νεφέλη ἔπλησεν τὸν οἶκον, LXX), so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD (ἔπλησεν δόξα κυρίου τὸν οἶκον, LXX).

Acts 2:2. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house (πνοῆς βιαίας ... ἐπλήρωσεν ὅλον τὸν οἶκον) where they were sitting.

There is reason to think that there is a deliberate allusion here on Luke's part. Each account reports a theophany, each theophany has two elements; and each account involves two "fillings". Luke uses οἶκος<sup>9</sup> in Acts 2:2, and in verse 4 he uses πίμπλημι, the same verb used in the verses from 1 Kings.<sup>10</sup> Given that this is a theophany of the Spirit, the ἤχος functions much as the cloud does. It is the sound of a mighty wind, yet no gale blows through the house. The ἤχος reveals the presence of the πνεῦμα (wind/Spirit) while leaving the πνεῦμα hidden. Similarly, the fiery brilliance of the glory of the LORD finds a counterpart in the γλῶσσαι, *tongues, as of fire* (Acts 2:3), spreading out over all those present. Before we examine this parallelism in more detail, however, it will be helpful to consider another passage from Luke-Acts.

### **Role-switching in Luke 8:22-25**

Luke 8:22-25 is the account of Jesus' stilling of the storm, which at first glance is somewhat reminiscent of the storm in Jonah 1. Some commentators prefer to go no further. Marshall (1978, p. 334), for example, considers it "unlikely that we are intended to find in Jonah a type of Jesus at this point; there are merely natural echoes of the story."

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<sup>9</sup> οἶκος here serves as a verbal rather than semantic link. The οἶκος = house fills a role equivalent to the οἶκος = temple.

<sup>10</sup> Luke uses πληρώω, which is very close in meaning, rather than πίμπλημι in verse 2.

Likewise, Keener (2015, p. 3559, note to table) thinks there is probably no connection between Jesus and Jonah each lying asleep in the boat (Luke 8:23; Jon 1:5).

Nevertheless, as table 2 indicates, there is evidence in Luke 8:22-25 of a sustained intertextual reference to Jonah 1, and Luke’s technique here will prove to be relevant to the story of Pentecost. To begin with, Jesus takes the role of Jonah, setting sail and falling asleep in the boat. The disciples act as the sailors. When the storm arises they wake him, as the captain woke Jonah. But here we encounter ambiguity (rows 6 and 7). It is the disciples together who wake Jesus, not, say, Peter as the “captain”. And the disciples’ words in Luke 8:24 can be read in a way that corresponds *either* to the captain rebuking Jonah (Jon 1:6) *or* to the sailors calling on their gods for help (Jon 1:5). If we accept that Mark was a source for Luke (e.g., Fitzmyer, 1970, pp. 66-73; Bovon, 2002, p. 6), it follows that the ambiguity has been deliberately introduced (cf. Mark 4:38<sup>11</sup>).

**Table 2. The Stilling of the Storm in Luke 8: Intertextual Links with Jonah 1**

#	Luke 8:22-25	Jonah 1 (Jesus = Jonah)	Jonah 1 (Jesus = YHWH)
	<i>Jesus in role of Jonah; disciples in role of sailors.</i>		
1	Jesus gets into a boat (ἐνέβη εἰς πλοῖον) (8:22a).	Jonah gets into (ἐνέβη εἰς) a boat (πλοῖον) (1:3b LXX).	

<sup>11</sup> Mark puts the disciples in the role of the rebuking captain. Matthew 8:25, on the other hand, puts them clearly in the role of the sailors calling on their God. It is hard not to conclude that all three have an intertextual link with Jonah 1 in view, Luke’s treatment being the most sophisticated.

2	Jesus and disciples set out to cross the lake (8:22b).	Jonah and sailors set out for Tarshish (1:3b).	
3	A windstorm sweeps down (8:23b).	YHWH sends a great wind (1:4a).	
4	The boat is in danger (8:23c).	The boat is in danger (1:4b).	
5	Jesus is asleep (8:23a).	Jonah is asleep (1:5b).	
<i>Anomaly emerges as reader reflects: who is in what role?</i>			
6	Jesus is woken by <i>the disciples</i> (8:24a).	Jonah is woken by <i>the captain</i> (1:6a).	
7	<i>The disciples</i> cry to Jesus, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” (8:24b).	<i>Captain</i> demands Jonah call on his God (1:6b).	<i>Sailors</i> each cry to their god (ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν θεὸν αὐτῶν) (1:5a).
<i>Resolution: Jesus now in role of YHWH; disciples still in role of sailors.</i>			
8	Jesus stills the storm (8:24c).		The sea stops raging (1:15b).
9	The disciples are amazed and afraid (8:25b).		The sailors fear YHWH greatly (1:16).
<i>Question of role posed for the implied reader:</i>			
10	“Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water?” (8:25c).		

The intertextual ambiguity in Luke 8:24 flags an unanticipated *role change*. Jesus does not respond as Jonah does. On the contrary, he responds as YHWH does once Jonah has left the boat. He commands the winds and the waves, and the waters become calm (Luke 8:24b; Jon 1:15). The disciples—now it is clear, still in the role of the sailors—react with fearful awe (Luke 8:25; cf. Jon 1:16). It is no accident that this account of Jesus as Jonah, but more than Jonah, is followed by Luke’s only story of Jesus extending his mission onto Gentile soil (Talbert, 2002, p. 101). Luke’s appropriation of the Jonah story has involved a *role-switch*. We will see a similar appropriation in Acts 2.

#### **Role-switching in Acts 2:1-4**

Reflecting further on the opening verses of Acts 2 with the foregoing in mind, certain anomalies come into view. The sound as of (ὡσπερ) a wind which fills the οἶκος is a theophany of the πνεῦμα, and yet the obvious word choice for the wind, πνεῦμα (*wind, Spirit*), is missing. Instead, Luke employs the near-synonym πνοή, which he never uses of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, the tongues as of (ὡσεὶ) fire are spread through the οἶκος, but Luke never says they *fill* it: neither πληρόω (verse 2) nor πίμπλημι (verse 4) is used in verse 3. Instead the tongues *rest* (καθίζω) on the disciples. So, on the one hand, what fills the οἶκος is not the πνεῦμα while, on the other, the tongues rest instead of filling the οἶκος. Neither πνεῦμα nor γλῶσσαι are actually said to fill the οἶκος.

There is a further anomaly. For Luke, the apostles were a recognised group of Christian emissaries greater in number than the twelve (Acts 14:4, 14) (Fitzmyer, 1998, pp. 196-197). Within that group, however, Luke identifies twelve as specifically chosen by Jesus to lead the church (Luke 6:12-16; Acts 15:2; etc.). This explains the importance assigned in Acts 1 (half the chapter) to filling the vacancy left by Judas. Commenting on Acts 1:15



Talbert (2005, p. 13) concludes that “the number one hundred and twenty (10 x 12) is symbolic, probably referring to the restored tribes of Israel,” a gathering of the nation with the (now) twelve apostles as their leaders. But if the 120 constitute a symbolic Israel, the implication is that while the priests in 1 Kings are excluded from the οἶκος, and cannot stand to minister, the disciples in Acts 2, representing the people of Israel, are sitting *within* it. They are no longer restricted to the Court of Israel and the Court of the Women. The verb used in Acts 2:2 for *sitting* is κάθημαι, and its cognate καθίζω is used in the following verse, where the tongues rest upon the disciples. Both words have connotations of staying or dwelling, reminiscent of 1 Kgs 8:12 (e.g., 1 Sam 27:7 LXX; Luke 21:35; 24:49; Acts 18:11) (Schneider, 1965, pp. 440, 445). But in spite of these anomalies a filling does take place. Table 3 demonstrates what is happening.

**Table 3. The Filling of the Temple: Intertextual Links between 1 Kings 8 and Acts 2.**

#	1 Kings 8:10-11 LXX	Acts 2:1-4	Apparent Anomalies
	<i>House in place of Temple; Spirit (πνεῦμα) in role of the LORD</i>		
1	Cloud fills the οἶκος (8:10).	Sound of a mighty wind fills the οἶκος (2:2).	
2	Glory of the LORD fills the οἶκος (8:11).	γλῶσσαι fill the place where the disciples are sitting (2:3).	
	<i>Anomalies emerge as the reader reflects: who/what is in which role?</i>		
3	Cloud fills the οἶκος (8:10).	Sound as of wind fills the οἶκος.	What fills the οἶκος is πνοή (2:2), not πνεῦμα.
4	Glory of the LORD fills the οἶκος (8:11).	Tongues as of fire spread through the οἶκος.	Tongues do not <i>fill</i> (πληρώω) the οἶκος, but <i>rest</i> (καθίζω) (2:2).
5	Priests excluded from οἶκος, cannot stand to minister (8:11).		Disciples sit within the οἶκος (2:2).
	<i>Resolution: Disciples in place of Temple; Spirit still in role of the LORD.</i>		
6	Cloud fills (πίμπλημι) the οἶκος (8:10).	The πνεῦμα fills (πίμπλημι) the disciples (2:4).	
7	Glory of the LORD fills (πίμπλημι) the οἶκος (8:11).	The γλῶσσαι attest the Spirit's indwelling (2:3, 4).	

As with the story of Jesus stilling the storm, the anomalies serve as a “speed bump,” prompting the ideal reader to re-examine the passage. In spite of first appearances, the reader is intended to recognise that the true οἶκος filled by the Spirit is not the house but the gathered disciples. Luke reserves the exact verb used for the divine filling in 1 Kings 8:10-11 LXX, πίμπλημι, for its true counterpart in Acts 2:4. The first four verses of Acts 2 have been crafted to show that a new, living temple is being dedicated, in which the disciples themselves become the dwelling place of God and fill the role of a renewed Israel.

### **2.1.2 Mary and the Spirit**

Further intertextual links exist which reinforce this conclusion. In Luke 1:35 the angel announces to Mary the conception of Christ:

Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ

καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι

The Holy Spirit will come upon you,

And the power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35).

Oliver (1964, p. 224) has drawn attention to the semantic and structural parallelism in this verse, and Marshall (1978, p. 70) notes that the Holy Spirit is “here equated in poetic parallelism with the power of God.” For our purposes, it is equally the case that the two predicates ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ, *will come upon you*, and ἐπισκιάσει σοι, *will overshadow you*, should be understood as equivalents which shed light on each other.

Ἐπισκιάσει, from ἐπισκιάζω, *overshadow, cause a darkening, cover* (BDAG, “ἐπισκιάζω”, pp. 378-379), alludes to Ex 40:35 LXX, where the cloud overshadows (ἐπεσκίαζεν) the Tabernacle at its dedication (Pao & Schnabel, 2007, p. 260). In like manner, the Spirit overshadows Mary at the conception of Christ. Dunn (1998, p. 8) notes this, seeing in Luke 1:35 “an allusion to the Shekinah, perhaps with the further implication that Jesus as Son of God manifests the divine glory.”

The conception of Jesus is linked intertextually to the dedication of the Tabernacle, and we saw above that Pentecost is linked to the dedication of the Temple. On all four of these occasions God comes to God’s people in an extraordinary manner. However, while there are clear intertextual links between the two dedications (the newly completed sanctuaries, the cloud, the glory, the divine presence filling the sanctuary, Moses/the priests unable to enter), it is less evident that there are any compelling connections between the conception of Jesus and Pentecost. In any event, is Mary relevant to the narrative of Luke-Acts beyond the opening chapters of Luke? Minear, for example, observes:

[Mary] is central to the entire collection of stories in Luke 1–2 in a way sharply in contrast to the other characters. ... Without her the stories would lose their cohesion. ... The frequency of references (12 times) indicates the significance of Mary within the two chapters. It is therefore striking, indeed, that the name recurs only once later in the corpus (Acts 1:14), ... and that, as Conzelmann phrases it, “Mary disappears to a greater extent in Luke than in Mark and Matthew” (*The Theology of Saint Luke*, p. 172). Moreover, many scholars have observed that nowhere later does Luke clearly refer to the virgin birth or its attendant

circumstances, a silence that is not adequately explained by 2:19 (Minear, 1966, p. 128).

However, if the predicate in Luke 1:35 which we have so far discussed, *the power of the Most High will overshadow you*, links the conception of Christ to the dedication of the Tabernacle, its paired predicate, *The Holy Spirit will come upon you*, does the same with Pentecost. Dunn does not deal with this. In his treatment of phrases used to describe the coming of the Spirit, he does include ἔρχομαι /ἐπέρχομαι τὸ πνεῦμα ἅγιον (Dunn, 1970, p. 70), but he restricts his survey to Acts, and therefore does not address the close semantic and lexical correspondence between Luke 1:35 and Acts 1:8. Each of these verses is an announcement that the Holy Spirit will come upon the hearers (ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σὲ / ἐπελθόντος ... ἐφ' ὑμᾶς) in power. Turner (2000, p. 164) recognises the similarity in language, but discounts the significance:

We have regularly noted points of distinction between what is said in Luke 1–2, and Luke's descriptions of Christian experience of the Spirit. At the point where the language is closest (Lk 1.35//Acts 1.8) the charismata denoted are most sharply distinct (divine begetting and inspired witness).

Nevertheless, there is reason to think that the close correspondence between these verses is intentional. In Acts 1:4-8 Jesus is speaking to the apostles as leaders and representatives of the disciples who gather with them and share in the same promise (Acts 2:38-39; cf. Luke 24:33, 48-49) (Keener, 2012, p. 689). Acts 1:8 is a promise for the whole group. In the light of this it is not incidental—let alone a suspected interpolation (Conzelmann, 1960, p. 172, footnote 1)—that in Acts 1:14 Mary reappears

in the narrative as part of that group, singled out by name. For Luke's Mary, Pentecost parallels the conception of Christ: the Spirit comes upon her and God indwells her for a second time. This time, however, she is not alone: she is one of some one hundred and twenty on whom the Spirit descends (Acts 2:3-4). The promise that was fulfilled ἐπὶ σὲ is now fulfilled ἐφ' ὑμᾶς.

A further intertextual link between Luke 1–2 and Acts 2 is forged by the word δούλη, *female slave*. This word occurs only three times in the New Testament. In Luke 1:38 Mary identifies herself as the servant of the Lord (ἡ δούλη κυρίου). Then, in Luke 1:48-49, part of the Magnificat, she glorifies God for the mighty things (μεγάλα) done for her as God's servant (τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ). And finally, in Acts 2 she is among God's male and female slaves (τοὺς δούλους μου καὶ ... τὰς δούλας μου, Acts 2:18) who prophesy and declare God's mighty acts (μεγαλεῖα; v. 11). So in both the infancy narrative and Acts 2 Mary is identified as a δούλη who prophesies. In both Luke 1 and Acts 2 divine infilling and inspired witness go together.

### **2.1.3 Summary**

We can now summarise the foregoing discussion. First, in the Old Testament the dedication of the Tabernacle is intertextually linked to the dedication of the Temple. They have in common the occasion, the cloud, the glory, the filling of the sanctuary, and Moses'/the priests' inability to enter it. Second, Pentecost is intertextually linked to the dedication of the Temple. In each case there is a theophany of God's hidden presence, a fire-like manifestation of heavenly origin, and the divine infilling of a place/people. Third, the conception of Jesus is intertextually linked to the dedication of the Tabernacle. Common elements are the use of ἐπισκιάζω, the divine overshadowing to which it refers,

and the divine infilling of a place/person. Fourth, the conception of Jesus is also intertextually linked to Pentecost, evidenced by the parallelism between Luke 1:35 and Acts 1:8, the presence of Mary at both events, the use of *δοῦλη*, the Spirit's role in the infilling of Mary/the disciples, and their subsequent prophetic speech. Taken together, these intersecting links form a strong intertextual network. This textual web of associations warrants the conclusion that at Pentecost the 120 disciples together become a living temple indwelt by the Spirit, a corporate temple no longer restricted to any one location (cf. Ezek 11:16).

## 2.2 Possession by the Spirit

The theophany at Pentecost—the sound like a mighty wind and the tongues like fire—is not repeated at Samaria, Caesarea or Ephesus. But at Pentecost and on each of these other occasions, there are further phenomena such as speaking in tongues. Anthropology provides some insights into these events (Twelftree, 2012, p. 22). In the cultures of the ancient Near East and Mediterranean, belief in spirit possession was found everywhere. The spirit who indwelt a person might be either good or demonic, and resulted in significant changes in a person's behaviour, voice, or personality on a temporary or permanent basis (Twelftree, 2012, pp. 23-24). Evil spirits called for exorcists, but if exorcists were to have credibility, they needed to demonstrate that the unseen spirits were actually cast out (Twelftree, 2012, pp. 26, 45-46). Josephus tells of an Eleazar he witnessed casting out demons:

Then, wishing to convince the bystanders and prove to them that he had this power, Eleazar placed a cup or foot-basin full of water a little way off and

commanded the demon, as it went out of the man, to overturn it and make known to the spectators that he had left the man (*Antiquities*, trans. 1950, 8.48).

When Jesus heals the Gerasene demoniac his power is attested in the same way. The evil spirits who are cast out enter a herd of unclean pigs and re-enact the fate of their leader Satan as the pigs plunge to destruction in the Sea of Galilee (Luke 8:30-33; cf. 10:18).

In the eyes of Luke and his readers, baptism in the Spirit is a form of spirit possession, in this case possession by the Spirit of God (Twelftree, 2012, pp. 24, 26). The miraculous signs—tongues, prophecy, etc.—serve to demonstrate the “taking possession” of the person’s faculties by the unseen Spirit. They also authenticate the testimony and attest the authority of the people through whom the Spirit is given (e.g., Acts 8:17-19; 19:6).

The signs that an evil spirit has departed are one-off events which verify for the audience what has taken place (Luke 4:35; etc.). It follows that, if speaking in tongues, etc. are likewise signs to verify the coming of the Spirit to those who witness and report it, we would expect that they, too, are one-off events. In other words, they would be one-off attestations as distinct from on-going or recurring spiritual gifts and, in this case, we should avoid harmonising them with Paul’s gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-10). Later in this chapter it will be argued that, in the honour-shame culture of the time, signs are reported precisely where attestation is required, and that where attestation is not required, signs are not reported. The attestation explanation matches the evidence without the need to call on the Pauline writings or assume what is not reported.



## 2.3 Five Passages in Acts

Four of the events to be discussed below—Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus—are corporate episodes in which the Spirit comes upon a group of people on the same occasion. Pentecost was the festival at which firstfruits were presented to God (Ex 23:16; 34:22; Num 28:26) (Vanderkam, 2009a, para. 1; Vanderkam, 2009b, para. 1). At Pentecost, and likewise at the “Pentecosts” of Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus, the Spirit falls on the representatives of a new group of believers. The signs that the Spirit now possesses them serve to demonstrate that these “firstfruits” are acceptable to God, that they are part of the living temple of the Spirit and included within the renewed Israel. At the same time each of these four events occurs in a context which sheds light on the specific attesting signs described by Luke. Opposition is encountered in each city, as Jesus’ followers confront hostile powers and opposing beliefs. The fifth event, Saul’s conversion, does not fit this pattern, and will be discussed separately at the end of this section.

### 2.3.1 Pentecost

Are the events at Pentecost to be understood as a reversal of the story of Babel? Some scholars think not. Dunn (1996, p. 24) points out that the disciples are still speaking multiple languages. Willimon (1988, p. 32) argues that all those who gather in Acts 2:5 are Jewish: it is not yet time for the division between Jews and Gentiles to be healed.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Acts 2:10 speaks of “Jews and proselytes.” Proselytes were Jews by conversion and “naturalisation.” No longer Gentiles, they came under the law and became citizens of the Jewish polity. They were, however, often seen as second-class Jews: hence the distinction in the mouths of the assembled crowd between

Barrett (1994, p. 119) observes that the crowd in Acts 2:6 was “confused” (συνεχύθη), a term which might be an allusion to Genesis 11:7 LXX where God says, *Let us ... confuse (συγγέωμεν) their language*. However, in his opinion:

it would be unwise to press too strongly the thought of a reversal of the dispersion of mankind as a result of diversity of speech. Luke does not say that confusion (σύγχυσις) was ended; it was now caused by an unexpected ability to understand what was said.

Nevertheless, the case that a reversal of Babel is intended must be considered stronger. Those who receive the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4, 11 are the firstfruits of the Jews. However, they are not simply a collection of individuals speaking under inspiration. They are functioning as a group, acting out a prophecy (cf. Acts 21:10-11) of the kingdom’s extension to the ends of the earth, with the nations uniting to declare *God’s deeds of power* (Acts 2:11).

#### *The immediate aftermath*

An initial realisation of the prophecy, though still involving only Jews, follows immediately. People from *every nation under heaven* have gathered together (Acts 2:5), and Keener remarks concerning this:

If we surmise that the table of nations in Gen 10 informs Luke’s list of nations (as it did most Jewish lists of nations), an allusion to Babel in Gen 11:1–9 in the same

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(native-born) Jews and proselytes (Cohen, 1989, pp. 28-30). In line with Luke’s inclusiveness, this is a distinction not found in the words of the narrator (2:5) or Peter (2:22, 29).

context seems likely. This suggestion becomes more likely when we consider that Babel represents the only scattering of languages in the OT and hence the only *potential* background for Luke's story shared by all his ideal audience (Keener, 2012, p. 842).

At Pentecost the mighty acts of God are proclaimed instead of the lofty plans of humanity (Gen 11:4; Acts 2:16-36). Where clarity was replaced by confusion, confusion is now replaced by clarity (Gen 11:3-4, 7; Acts 2:5, 37). Where lack of spiritual understanding was followed by lack of verbal understanding (Gen 11:4, 9), verbal understanding is now followed by spiritual understanding (Acts 2:8-10, 37-41). Where the people of Babel failed to make a name for themselves (Gen 11:4, 9), the believers are now regarded with awe and favour (Acts 2:43, 47). Where before God scattered and thwarted a united people (Gen 11:6-8), God now unites and prospers a people drawn from many backgrounds (Acts 2:42-47). The imagery here is not merely of a renewed Israel, but of a restored humanity.

The events at Pentecost point forward to the end of the division between Israel and the Gentiles. It is important to note that Luke is not presenting the reversal of Babel in terms of reverting to one language. Rather, he appropriates speaking in tongues—the very symbol of Babel's presumption, confusion, division, and disempowerment—to represent the reversal of Babel: submission to God, spiritual enlightenment, unity, and empowerment for mission.

## **The city of persecution**

The advance of the kingdom of God at Pentecost does not go unchallenged. In Luke-Acts, Jerusalem is the primary centre of persecution (Luke 13:33-34; Acts 21:10-11; etc.). In the early chapters of Acts opposition to the Christian community escalates. Peter and John are arrested and warned to stop teaching (Acts 4:1-22). Next, all the apostles are arrested and flogged (5:17-42). Finally, Stephen is seized, tried and put to death (6:9–7:60).

For the Jewish leaders, who see themselves as God’s representatives, the church is like a new Babel. They watch these united people building their community and making a name for themselves (Gen 11:3-4; cf. Acts 2:47; 5:13-15; 6:7). To them, this is the beginning of something which threatens to be unstoppable (Gen 11:6; cf. Acts 5:38-39). They intervene to put a halt to the building work, and scatter the believers in Jesus just as God scattered the people at Babel (Gen 11:8-9; Acts 8:1).

However, we argued above (section 2.1) that Luke’s “impressionistic” approach allows him to combine multiple strands of thought. In Acts 2:1-11 he has already foreshadowed this persecution, no less than the reversal of Babel. The disciples, people of one speech, are assembled in one place; God’s presence comes down from heaven, causing them to speak in different languages; and they find themselves among people representing every nation under heaven. This parallels both the story of Babel, and the “counter-story” in the previous paragraph.

But, although the persecution serves God’s purposes, the Jewish leaders’ perspective is a false one. Peter’s Pentecost sermon and Stephen’s defence in Acts 7 form an inclusio

around the church's opening witness in Jerusalem, and both climax on the same note: the hearers are charged with putting Jesus to death (Acts 2:36; 7:51-53). The reactions of the audiences are then expressed in strikingly similar terms:

Acts 2:37. Ακούσαντες ... κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν, *Hearing ... they were cut to the heart* (BDAG, “κατανύσσομαι”, p. 523);

Acts 7:54. Ακούοντες ... διεπρίοντο ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, *Hearing ... they were cut to their hearts/enraged* (MCGD, “διαπρίω”).

The semantic and lexical parallels highlight the contrast in what follows: repentance, faith and the reversal of Babel on one hand, unbelief, rage and violence on the other.

Stephen's hearers are revealed in the role of the people of Babel. This is evident in several ways. First, we saw above that when Peter's Pentecost sermon concludes, confusion is replaced with clarity. But when Stephen ends his speech, the proceedings of the council lose all semblance of order and descend into chaos. Second, Luke makes use of a further parallel. At a corresponding, critical point in Jesus' trial, the priests and the people demand *with loud shouts* (φωναῖς μεγάλαις) that he should be crucified (Luke 23:23). Likewise, in Acts 7:57, Stephen's hearers rush upon him *with a loud voice* (φωνῆ μεγάλῃ). Once again, the similarity highlights a significant difference: Luke switches to the singular. This results in an allusion to φωνὴ μία πᾶσιν (Gen 11:1 LXX), *one voice/cry for all*—a motif he will also employ for Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus. Just as Luke appropriates speaking in tongues, paradoxically, to represent the reversal of Babel, so he appropriates φωνὴ μία πᾶσιν—the symbol of humanity's ancient unity—to represent the

hubris, confusion and futility of Babel. Third, as the Jewish leaders rush upon Stephen, they cover their ears so they can no longer take in anything that he may say, an echo of ἵνα μὴ ἀκούσωσιν in Gen 11:7 LXX. And, finally, the death of Stephen triggers a persecution in which the church in Jerusalem is scattered, just as God scattered the people at Babel. The verb for “scatter”, διασπείρω, is used three times in the story of Babel (Gen 11:4, 8, 9 LXX). Luke uses it three times in relation to this scattering from Jerusalem (Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19), its only uses in the New Testament. But he also emphasizes that, unlike the people of Babel, the believers in Jesus do not stop building their community (Acts 8:4; 11:19-20). It is the project of the Jewish leaders which fails.

In Acts 2:1-11, when the Spirit comes, the believers in Jesus perform an enacted prophecy of the church’s expansion to the ends of the earth: they utter possessed speech in foreign tongues, extolling God’s mighty deeds. The opposition of the Jewish leaders culminates in a second corporate act, their concerted outcry and deed of violence, the stoning of Stephen. However their action proves futile against God’s *deeds of power* (Acts 2:11). The scattering of the believers in Jesus only furthers the extension of the church.

### **2.3.2 Samaria**

#### **“In all Judea and Samaria”**

In Acts 1:8 the phrase [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ, [*in*] *all Judea and Samaria* is best read as grouping Judea with Samaria, so that πάσῃ refers to the whole, and the phrase is so translated by NRSV, NIV, NASB, NJB, ESV and NABRE. As Keener remarks:

Because one feminine definite article covers both the Greek words for Judea and Samaria, we should think of them together as the next stage of the mission (thus we read of more of the Judean mission in [Acts] 9:32–43, *after* the Samaritan mission of 8:5–25). Thus we may have not four geographic sections of Acts but three (Keener, 2012, p. 702; italics in original).

This has not always been evident to commentators, given that Samaritans are readily thought of as intermediate between Jews and Gentiles. So, for example, Carroll (2018, p. 73) lumps Judea with Jerusalem: “Although the mission at first is centred in Jerusalem and its environs in Judea, [Acts] chapter 8 represents an important threshold, Samaria.”

Dunn concurs:

The initial expansion in “all Judaea” ([Acts] 1.8) is not regarded as something separate from the beginnings in Jerusalem itself; hence it can be simply alluded to in 5.16 and presupposed in 9.31. So the first real expansion is into Samaria (Dunn, 1996, p. 102).

### **The reunification of Israel**

But what if Luke is not treating the evangelisation of Samaria as a step beyond Judea? What if Judea and Samaria are being thought of as one, as Judah and Israel were one in the undivided monarchy of David and Solomon? What if Luke views the evangelisation of Samaria not as the next step beyond Judea, but as the reincorporation of the ten tribes into a renewed, undivided kingdom?

In the biblical account, two great issues divided the Jews from the Samaritans. In 1 Kings 12, ten tribes rebelled against the house of David. They also instituted false religious practices. When their kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians, people from other nations were brought in, and the corrupted worship of God was mixed with further pagan practices (2 Kgs 17:24-41). The animosity between Jews and Samaritans was pronounced. In the light of this, the response to Philip's proclamation of the Messiah is extraordinary (cf. 2 Chr 30:6-11). As with Peter's sermon at Pentecost, Philip's message to these "Israelites" meets with a wholesale response: the people believe and are baptised (Acts 8:6, 12). However, they do not receive the Holy Spirit until two of the apostles come down from Jerusalem.

Why is this? McCabe (2011, p. 12) is surely correct in maintaining that the twelve apostles represent the renewed Israel under the authority of God's vindicated Messiah. So it is significant that the two most prominent apostles, Peter and John (Acts 1:13; 3:1-11; 4:1-2, 13, 19-20) are the ones who come to Samaria. The representatives of the two leading tribes lay hands on a gathering of the ten. This is an exercise of spiritual authority, marking the end of the rebellion of the ten tribes (1 Kgs 12:19-21), and the reunification of all Israel under the Davidic Messiah (Gen 49:8). At the same time, as the narrator confirms, it serves to impart the Spirit (Acts 8:18; cf. Turner, 2000, p. 365). The signs of possession by the Spirit which follow demonstrate God's acceptance of these firstfruits of the Samaritans, and also their adherence to and participation in the true temple. Like Pentecost, this is an unrepeatable moment in salvation history.



### **The city of syncretism**

Jesus' ministry is to both Israel and the Gentiles (Luke 2:30-32), but from both his followers will meet opposition. Within Israel, Jerusalem is the city of persecution, while Samaria is a city characterised by syncretism. Simon is the chief protagonist at Samaria, a magician at a time when magic and religion are not sharply distinguished (Stratton, 2008, para. 1). Significant parallels are evident between the activities of Simon and those of Philip. Both are at work in Samaria; both speak (τοῖς λεγομένοις, Acts 8:6; λέγων, 8:9); the Samaritans listen eagerly to both (προσεῖχον, 8:6, 10, 11); both have a large following (8:6, 10); and both impress the crowds with amazing acts (8:6, 11) (Fabien, 2010, pp. 211-212).

There are, nevertheless, significant differences. Philip proclaims the Messiah (Acts 8:5), while Simon proclaims himself (8:9). The Samaritans assign no title to Philip, but, from the least to the greatest, they all call Simon *the power of God that is called Great* (8:10). Whether this grandiloquent title is regarded, for example, as a claim to some form of deity (Witherington, 1998, p. 284; cf. Keener, 2013, p. 1512) or as a title for the *Taheb* (Fabien, 2010, pp. 212-215), it is certainly syncretistic, associating Simon's magical pretensions with the name of God.

This helps to explain the vehemence of Peter's response when Simon seeks to buy the power to bestow the Holy Spirit. Should Simon's syncretistic mix of magic and the worship of God be involved in building the temple of the Spirit, the temple itself will become syncretistic. Gerizim, so to speak, will triumph over Jerusalem. Peter's response, *You have no part or share in this* (Acts 8:21) is not unlike the reply given to their Samarian adversaries by the exiles returning from Babylon:

When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the LORD, the God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of families and said to them, “Let us build with you, for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esar-haddon of Assyria who brought us here.” But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of families in Israel said to them, “You shall have no part with us<sup>13</sup> in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus of Persia has commanded us” (Ezra 4:1-3).

Peter’s reply to Simon takes the form of an imprecation, ἀργύριόν σου σὺν σοὶ εἴη εἰς ἀπώλειαν, *May your silver perish with you* (Acts 8:20). The word εἴη is not an imperative, but a voluntative optative, used to express an attainable wish (GGBB, p. 481). This means Peter’s words have the force of an imminent threat and call to repentance rather than a performative curse as in Acts 5:9 (Fabien, 2010, pp. 228-229). His reference to *the gall of bitterness* (χολὴν πικρίας, 8:23) alludes to the warning against falling away given in Deuteronomy 29 (cf. Marshall, 2007, pp. 572-573):

Who is there among you, man or woman or family or tribe, whose mind has turned away from the Lord our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations? Who among you is a root growing up *with gall and bitterness* (ἐν χολῇ καὶ πικρίᾳ, LXX)? And it shall be, if he hears the words of this imprecation and declares in his heart, saying: “*May holy things become mine, because I shall walk in the*

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<sup>13</sup> Literally, *It is not for us and for you*, Ezra 4:3 NETS.

*wandering of my heart,” lest the sinner destroy the sinless as well, God will not want to pardon him, but the Lord’s anger and his zeal will then blaze out against that person. (Deut 29:18-20a NETS / 29:17-19a LXX; my italics).*

This is the context in which Simon’s response should be understood. He is cast in the role of one who belongs to Israel but who, unless he repents, will be a source of bitter spiritual poison (Matthews, 2007, para. 1). Simon’s words in verse 24 have been variously interpreted as indicating genuine repentance (Johnson, 1992, p. 153), fear of punishment with no real change of heart (Parsons, 2008, p. 118), or an open question (Keener, 2013, pp. 1532-1533).

In favour of the first option are several considerations. First, Simon is said to have believed in the same way as the other Samaritans. There is a clear parallelism between Acts 8:12 and 13. The Samaritans believe Philip and are baptised; Simon, too, believes and is baptised. The same words (*πιστεύω, βαπτίζω*) are employed in each case. Up to and including the point of baptism there is no significant difference between Simon and the others. The adjectival intensive (*αὐτὸς, himself*, 8:13) even places stress on Simon’s personal commitment (Fabien, 2010, pp. 217-218).

Second, Simon is still confused. The Jews who come together at Pentecost are twice said to be amazed by what they hear (*ἐξίστημι*, Acts 2:7, 12).<sup>14</sup> Peter’s message resolves their confusion and they believe in Christ. The same is true of the Samaritans. They are twice said to be amazed by Simon’s magic (*ἐξίστημι*, Acts 8:9, 11). Then Philip proclaims the

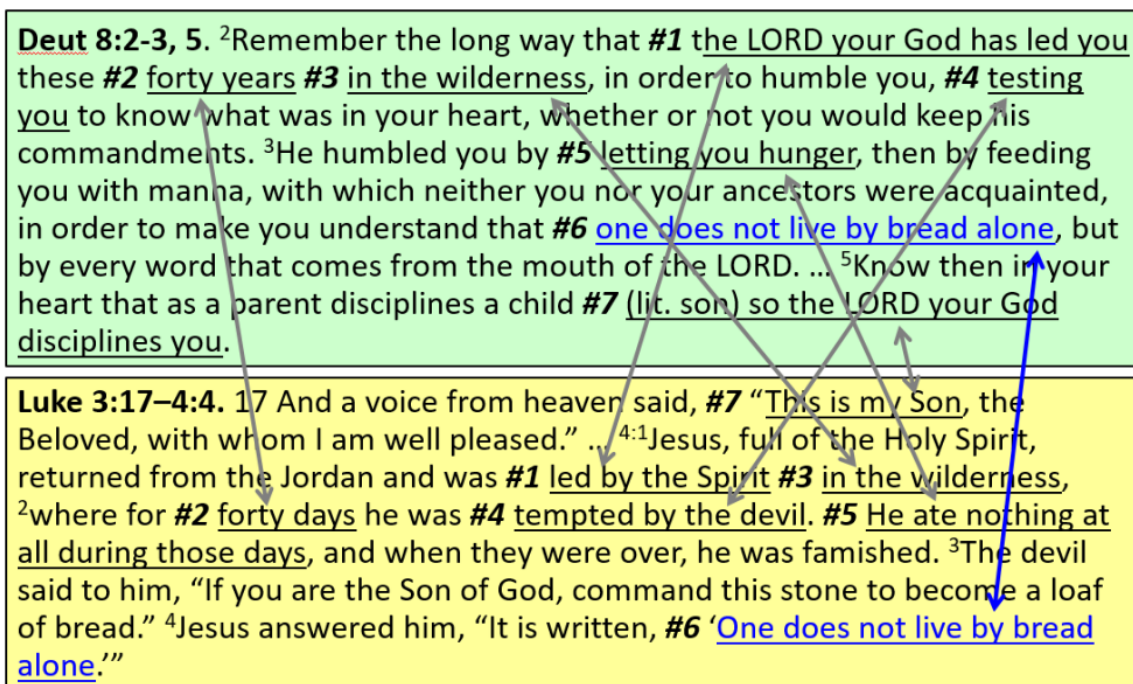
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<sup>14</sup> *ἐξίστημι* has the sense of being in a state in which things make little or no sense. It can be translated *confuse, amaze* or *astound* (BDAG, “ἐξίστημι”, 1, p. 350).

Messiah and they believe. The confusion of Babel is reversed, just as it was at Pentecost. What Luke is doing here is placing the Samaritans on a par with the Jews: their coming to faith matches that of their fellow-Israelites. But Simon, even after he believes, is still said to be amazed—though now this is stated only once, not twice (ἐξίστημι, Acts 8:13). Simon’s belief retains aspects of syncretism. With a magician’s eye, his attention is fixed on the miracles and the miracle-workers (Fabien, 2010, pp. 219-220).

Third, as figure 1 indicates, when Luke quotes or alludes to an Old Testament passage, it is important to consider whether he is drawing attention to a network of associations.

**Figure 1. The Context of a Quotation**



Intertextual links between Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 5 and Luke 3:17-4:4 (NRSV).

Deuteronomy 29:18-20a appears to be such a case. This passage is a warning to those in danger of falling away, not a condemnation of those who were never in relation with God

in the first place. Peter has urged Simon to pray to the Lord (Acts 8:22), but Simon knows that he has already said in his heart, *May holy things become mine* (Deut 29:19 NETS): his eyes and heart have already been set upon holy things (Acts 8:13, 18-19).

Accordingly he fears that *God will not want to pardon him* (29:20 NETS). The object of his fear is not Peter's curse (thus Pervo, 2009, p. 215), but precisely what it should be, the judgment of God *lest the sinner destroy the sinless as well* (29:20 NETS). When he pleads with Peter and John to pray on his behalf, he uses a redundant pronoun for emphasis (δεήθητε ὑμεῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ, lit. *Pray for me yourselves*). Simon is deeply convicted: if *he* prays to the Lord, God may not pardon. This is not the response of one who intends to keep on walking in the wanderings of his heart (29:19 NETS). It is not the response of the "adversaries of Judah and Benjamin," who react to their rebuff by seeking to undermine and discourage the Jews (Ezra 4:4). Unlike the later tradition of Simon's apostasy, Luke's account of him ends on a positive note (Fitzmyer, 1998, p. 407).

Following the Spirit baptism of the firstfruits of the Samaritans, we read that Peter and John proclaim the good news in many Samaritan towns and return to Jerusalem (Acts 8:25). Their whole journey parallels the foray into Samaria by King Josiah. Josiah destroys Samaria's central sanctuary at Bethel (2 Kgs 23:15-16a), and then we read:

Josiah removed all the shrines of the high places that were in the towns of Samaria, which kings of Israel had made, provoking the Lord to anger; he did to them just as he had done at Bethel. He slaughtered on the altars all the priests of the high places who were there, and burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:19-20).

After dealing with the problem at the centre, Peter and John likewise visit the towns of Samaria and then return to Jerusalem. But this parallel includes a pointed contrast. Instead of brute force and “the bloody elimination of the priests of the ‘high places’ ... an enormity which would have reflected no credit on Josiah” (Gray, 1977, p. 739), Peter and John’s victorious expedition into Samaria brings the power of the kingdom of God rather than political and military power. Instead of violence and destruction they bring reconciliation, unity and the good news of Christ. Instead of destroying the central high place, they bring the true temple. The theme throughout Acts 8:4-25, with its repeated allusions to the history of the northern kingdom, is the reunion of Judea and Samaria under the rule of the Davidic Messiah and with the same temple. In this temple the firstfruits of the Samaritans participate through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### **2.3.3 *Caesarea***

At Jerusalem deliverance came to Jews who had persecuted Christ himself and put him to death (Acts 2:36-41). At Samaria it came to Israelites who had rebelled against the house of David and adopted false religion. Now, at Caesarea, it comes to Gentiles who have invaded and oppressed Israel. What makes this event so shocking to Peter’s compatriots—the reason that it requires divine authorisation in the form of two visions and the unanticipated descent of the Spirit—is that Gentiles, by definition, are in darkness and excluded from the people of God (Luke 2:32; cf. Eph 2:12).

Cornelius and his household would be best described as God-fearers. Cohen discusses seven degrees to which Gentiles could show respect for or attachment to Judaism, culminating in conversion. His results are tentative because of the limited evidence (Cohen, 1989, p. 14), but with that proviso he describes the fifth category as follows:

Some Jewish texts describe a category of gentiles who were so devoted to the god<sup>15</sup> of the Jews that they venerated him (almost) exclusively even if they did not observe his laws. ... [They] apparently do not observe the Jewish laws (they remain uncircumcised); instead they renounce polytheism [and] worship the one god (Cohen, 1989, p. 21).

This category appears to fit Cornelius' situation fairly closely. He is said to give alms generously, and pray constantly to God, though he is not said to observe any of the Jewish laws or prohibitions (Acts 10:1-2). But in spite of his devotion, he would still be a Gentile:

[None of the texts] implies that gentiles of this sort were granted membership in the Jewish community. If a gentile destroyed his ancestral gods and declared exclusive loyalty to the god of the Jews, his neighbours might have regarded him as a Jew, but there is no sign that the Jews did the same (Cohen, 1989, pp. 22-23).

To be accepted as a Jew meant one had to observe the Jewish laws (including circumcision), worship God exclusively, and integrate into the Jewish community (Cohen, 1989, p. 26).

But in Acts 10 the re-enactment of Pentecost is unmistakable: Cornelius and his friends are waiting assembled in an οἶκος (Acts 10:22, 24, 27); the Spirit comes suddenly upon

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<sup>15</sup> Cohen (1989, p. 14) chooses to refer to God as “god” to reflect a pagan perspective.

them; and they speak in tongues and extol God (10:44, 46). The imagery places them no longer in the Court of the Gentiles but in the innermost sanctuary, fully united now with the renewed Israel. They, too, are now part of the living temple of the Spirit. The mingling of unclean animals in Peter's vision (10:9-16) finds its counterpart in the mingling of "unclean" voices now made clean, the many languages of the Gentiles uniting in praise to God. At Pentecost, the disciples who spoke in tongues were acting out a prophecy of the kingdom's extension to every nation under heaven (1:8; 2:5). Cornelius and his friends now participate in that corporate prophecy at the same time as they themselves become the firstfruits of the Gentiles, the collective representatives of those who will follow from the nations of the world. This is once again a unique event in salvation history. As we will see, it is also an event linked tightly to its context.

### **City of oppression**

If Jerusalem represents persecution within Israel itself, Caesarea symbolises Gentile oppression. Caesarea was the provincial capital of Judea and thus the seat of Roman occupation (Hohlfelder, 1992, p. 800). Judea had come under Roman control in 63 BCE when Pompey intervened in a civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. Both sent ambassadors to Pompey in Damascus asking for support. Various machinations followed, resulting in Pompey siding with Hyrcanus and marching on Jerusalem. There Aristobulus came to him and submitted. Jerusalem was placed under siege and captured, and as the city fell, Pompey and those with him entered the sanctuary. This was seen as a scandalous act since the Temple was a place forbidden to Gentiles. Once hostilities ceased Pompey placed Judea under Roman administration (*Antiquities*, 14:29-74; Marshall, 1992, p. 395).



Luke presents a symbolic reversal of these events. From Caesarea Cornelius sends envoys to Joppa to request Peter's help (Acts 10:3-6, 22). When Peter and those with him arrive, the Roman centurion falls at his feet (10:25)—Peter, however, will not allow this. Peter and his friends then enter Cornelius' house (οἶκος, 10:22), though *it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile* (10:28). After Peter speaks and the Spirit falls upon his hearers, it is the apostle who commands (προστάσσω, 10:48) that the Gentiles, now under the authority of Christ, be baptised in his name.

However, like the leaders of the Jews in Jerusalem and Simon at Samaria, an adversary arises who tries to obstruct the expansion of the church. This champion of oppression is Herod Agrippa I. Herod's motives are political rather than religious: he acts against the church because he sees that it pleases the Jews. He puts James to death, and is about to do the same to Peter (Acts 12:2-3). But Peter is delivered by an angel (12:6-11) and Herod loses sixteen men (four τετράδια), executed on his own orders (12:4, 19).

However, this reverse is only the prelude. Herod travels to Caesarea (Acts 12:19), just as Peter had done previously. Like Pompey, he receives supplicants and seeks to exert power over a neighbouring country. People assemble to hear him, as people had gathered to hear Peter. But while Peter's hearers speak in tongues and extol God (10:46), Herod's hearers extol Herod. They keep shouting, "*The voice of a god, and not of a mortal!*" (12:22). Like the people of Babel they have φωνή μία πᾶσιν, *one voice for all* (Gen 11:1 LXX). This apparent reversal of Babel's confusion, however, is a forced unity: their country depends on Herod's country for food (Acts 12:20).

But Herod's speech, like Peter's before him, is brought to an end by divine intervention. Peter had refused worship from Cornelius (10:25), but Herod is quite willing to accept divine honours (Tannehill, 1990, p. 157). Therefore, while an angel of the Lord has saved Peter from death, an angel of the Lord strikes Herod down for his failure to give glory to God. The kingdom of God advances, but Herod's attempt to extend his power ends in failure. Herod, the leader of the oppressors, who sought to kill the leader of the church, is the one who suffers death himself.

These two events at Caesarea are clearly intended to be compared and contrasted. What is significant for us is that a group speaking in tongues and extolling God is paired with another group clearly acting as one, shouting the same words together and extolling Herod. This further supports the conclusion that what happens at the house of Cornelius is a corporate event.

### **2.3.4 Ephesus**

#### **John and Jesus in Luke's gospel**

Acts 19:1-7 is the end-point of an important theme in Luke-Acts. Fitzmyer (1970, pp. 313-314) has drawn attention to the parallelism between the infancy narratives of John the Baptist and Jesus. So, for example, the angel Gabriel announces both births (Luke 1:19, 26); Zechariah and Mary each question the announcement (1:18, 34); John is filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb and Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit (1:15, 35); the expectant mothers prophesy (1:41-55); the births are occasions for joy (1:58; 2:10-11); and prophecies concerning each accompany their circumcisions (1:67-

79; 2:25-38). However, it is noteworthy that in the parallelism John is subordinated to Jesus:

The Jesus-side always comes off better. For instance, John's parents are "upright in God's sight" (1:6), but Mary is the favored one (1:28). John's mother, though aged and barren, eventually bears him naturally, but Jesus' mother bears him wondrously. John will be great before the Lord (1:15), but Jesus will be Great. ... John will walk before the *Kyrios* (1:16-17), but Jesus will be called *Kyrios* (2:11 [in a different sense, of course]), as well as Savior and Messiah. John's father queries the angel and is struck dumb (1:19-22), but Jesus' mother queries the angel and is reassured, declaring herself the handmaid of the Lord (1:34-38) (Fitzmyer, 1970, p. 315; square brackets in original).

More can be said. First, the parallels continue beyond the infancy narrative. Both John and Jesus are in the wilderness before starting their public ministry (Luke 1:80; 4:1-13). Both proclaim good news to the people (3:18; 4:18, 43). Both have disciples (5:33). Both are arrested (3:19-20; 22:24), and both are put to death by an unjust ruler (3:19; 9:9; 23:23-24). At the same time, the priority of Jesus over John continues. In prison John becomes uncertain about Jesus' identity. He sends disciples to ask, "*Are you the one who is to come (ὁ ἐρχόμενος)?*" (Luke 7:18-19). Luke has already told us that John had encountered Jesus as the coming one (ἔλθῃ, Luke 1:43) and responded in the Spirit. Yet now he and his disciples are unsure about Jesus' identity. Jesus' reply addresses the confusion (Luke 7:21-23).

Second, John and Jesus are united. Each assigns honour to the other (Luke 3:16; 7:26-28), and their ministries of prophetic witness reinforce each other (7:31-35). Such close cooperation by relatives reflects the honour-shame culture of first-century Israel and the Graeco-Roman world more generally. In this culture, social interactions outside one's close friends or extended family were potential contests for honour, but blood relatives were always to be trusted, and granted help and cooperation (Malina & Neyrey, 1991, pp. 29, 32; Pilch, 1998a, pp. 35-36). Plutarch, for example, says, "In so far as Nature has made [siblings] separate in their bodies, so far do they become united in their emotions and actions" (deSilva, 2000, ch. 5, section "The ethos of kin", para. 3).

### **The followers of John and Jesus at Ephesus**

John and Jesus each founded a group of disciples, and now, at Ephesus, Jesus' disciples encounter some disciples of John. In the culture of the time, the head of a group symbolised and embodied the group's collective honour, and therefore its standing in relation to other groups (Malina & Neyrey, 1991, pp. 39-40). Accordingly, the followers of John and Jesus display a relationship parallel to that between John and Jesus themselves. (Keener, 2014, p. 2814).

In Acts 18:24-28 a follower of John carries out the mission of Jesus. The ministry of Apollos is that of a second Paul. Like Paul, he begins his witness in the synagogue (18:26; cf. 9:20-22; 13:5, 14; 14:1). Like Paul, he teaches about Jesus (18:25; cf. 13:23-39; 17:3). Like Paul, he speaks boldly (18:26; cf. 13:46; 14:3). And like Paul, he leaves Ephesus and strengthens the disciples of Jesus (18:27; cf. 18:21, 23)—all this still as a follower of John. Nevertheless, he gives place to the followers of Jesus. Although he

teaches the way of the Lord accurately (ἀκριβῶς), Priscilla and Aquila explain it to him more accurately still (ἀκριβέστερον) (18:25-26).

Then, in Acts 19:1-7, a follower of Jesus carries out the mission of John. Paul comes to a group of John's disciples in the role of a second John. Like John, he is filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17; cf. Luke 1:15). Like John, he comes down from the higher country (ἀνωτερικὰ μέρη) to deliver his message (Acts 19:1; cf. Luke 3:3). The message he delivers is John's: he speaks about the Holy Spirit and directs his hearers to John's coming one (Acts 19:4; cf. Luke 3:15-16). Like John's, his hearers respond and are baptised (Acts 19:5; cf. Luke 3:21).

It is the work of the Spirit to empower witness (Acts 1:8). So, when Paul asks, *Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?* (19:2), he wants to find out why, given this significant group of disciples, there is no functioning church at Ephesus (cf., e.g., 11:19-21)—he is aware of this from his previous visit.<sup>16</sup> When they reply that they have never heard of the Holy Spirit, he asks, *Into what then were you baptized?* (19:3). What baptism would not have led to a knowledge of the Spirit's existence, since both John (Luke 3:16) and the apostles (Acts 2:38) announced it as part of their baptismal message?

John was confused in Luke 7, and his disciples at Ephesus are confused as well. Paul proceeds to rectify their confusion. He tells them that John had directed his hearers to the

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<sup>16</sup> A church will be established after Paul has witnessed in the synagogue and leaves, taking the disciples with him (Acts 19:9). In Acts 18 we know of only Paul, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, all still worshipping at the synagogue (Ervin, 1984, pp. 56-57).

coming one, Jesus. In the first century, great weight was attached to the authority of the person in charge of a group, from the *pater familias* right up to the overarching authority of the emperor. Disciples, for their part, were to imitate their masters and respect their authority (Neyrey, 1998, pp. 95, 97; cf. 1 Cor 11:1). The disciples believe Paul's message and, therefore, out of proper respect to John, they transfer their allegiance to Jesus by being baptised in his name (Acts 19:5).

Jesus and John were sent together by God, and they were both empowered by the Spirit (Luke 1:15; 4:1, 14). The disciples of Jesus were also empowered by the Spirit at Pentecost, but the disciples of John, even though we find them travelling *to the ends of the earth* (cf. Acts 1:8), are still without the power of Spirit baptism. The Spirit had already come upon the firstfruits of the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles. John's disciples, however, are a group apart.

In the culture of the time an important source of honour was ascription. Ascribed honour was bestowed on someone by a notable person of power (Malina & Neyrey, 1991, p. 28). John had been ascribed honour by God (Luke 1:15), and this honour was of the highest order: *among those born of women no one is greater than John* (Luke 7:28). Because of this no Jewish, Samaritan or Gentile leader—not even the high priest or the emperor—took precedence over John or had a superior claim over his disciples. Jesus alone had higher honour. John had made this clear: *I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals* (Luke 3:16).

In Acts 19, the references to John's baptism (19:3-4) and the Holy Spirit (19:2) recall Jesus' promise to the eleven apostles:

John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:5, 8).

The Ephesian disciples—there are *about twelve* of them (Acts 19:7)—are in a parallel situation, about to be baptised with the Holy Spirit. Later, when the Spirit comes upon them, they speak in tongues and prophesy just as the (now twelve) apostles did at Pentecost (19:6-7; cf. 1:26–2:4; 2:17-18). At Pentecost, the apostles represent the twelve tribes of the renewed Israel. John’s ministry had been to Israel (Luke 1:16, 80), and John’s followers here collectively represent his disciples. They are the firstfruits of the disciples of John.<sup>17</sup> However, they have now become disciples of Jesus. Just as John’s role came to its conclusion, so now the separate role of his disciples comes to an end.

Jesus and John stood together in their prophetic witness to Israel (Luke 7:31-36), and the same is true of their followers at Ephesus. Apollos’ ministry complemented that of Paul: he continued the witness when Paul departed, and Paul resumed it when Apollos left. Apollos taught accurately about Jesus (Acts 18:26) and Paul taught accurately about John (19:4). Apollos spoke boldly in the synagogue (*παρρησιάζεσθαι*, 18:26), and now Paul speaks boldly in the synagogue (*ἐπαρρησιάζετο*, 19:8). The *about twelve* disciples are part of the community of believers when Paul’s witness leads to the establishment of a distinct Christian congregation (19:9). However, this is not the end of confusion.

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<sup>17</sup> Those filled with the Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 were at the same time the firstfruits of the Jews and the firstfruits of the disciples of Jesus.

### **The city of confusion**

Jesus' ministry to Israel and the Gentiles, carried forward through his disciples, met force at Jerusalem and Caesarea, and false religion at Samaria. Now, among the Gentiles, they encounter false religion once again.

Ephesus, for Luke, is the city of confusion. Confusion is a theme running through successive, escalating episodes in Acts 18 and 19, in the same way that escalating persecution is reported in Jerusalem (Acts 4:1–8:1). In each case, confusion is linked with errors in belief. Apollo is least affected. He teaches about Jesus accurately, but still needs matters explained more precisely. The disciples of John are more confused: in spite of John's own witness they know nothing of the Holy Spirit (19:2). Worse still is the case of the seven sons of Sceva, a self-proclaimed Jewish "high priest," who unsuccessfully try to use the name of Jesus for its magical potency during an exorcism (19:13-16) (Bruce, 1988, pp. 368-369).

But the greatest confusion is still to come. This advance of the kingdom of God does not go unchallenged. Ephesus in the first century was the seat of worship for Artemis, the patron deity of Ephesus and the most popular goddess in Anatolia (McDonald, 2007, para. 4; Aune, 2000, pp. 413-414). The protagonist of Artemis is Demetrius the silversmith. Demetrius stirs up a mob, hoping to unite the people around what for Luke is false worship. However, his efforts turn into a farcical parody of Acts 2. The two stories start off in tandem. The disciples at Pentecost confess *God's deeds of power*; Demetrius and his friends yell, "*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!*" (Acts 2:11; 19:28)—though, conspicuously, Luke ascribes no deeds to Artemis. The crowds who gather at both places



are confused (passives of συγκέω, Acts 2:6; 19:32; cf. Gen 11:7, 9 LXX) (Keener, 2012, pp. 843-844). But now the two episodes diverge. Peter comes before the crowd, but at Ephesus Paul is missing (Acts 2:14; 19:30-31). Peter speaks, but at Ephesus the speaker is a non-Christian Jew, and he is shouted down (Acts 19:33-34). In a reversal of the confusion of Babel, Peter's hearers understand his message and say, "*What should we do?*"; but the crowd at Ephesus, with no understanding whatsoever, continue to shout, "*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!*" (Acts 2:37; 19:34). They do so with *one voice*, φωνή ... μία ἐκ πάντων (Acts 19:34)—once more an allusion to Genesis 11:1 LXX. But it all ends in futility: the town clerk, in the role of God (!), scatters the assembly, still no wiser and with their purpose unaccomplished (Acts 19:40-41; cf. Gen 11:8-9).

The reversal of Babel at Pentecost and the re-enactment of Babel at Ephesus form an *inclusio* around Luke's account of the church-planting work of the earliest church.<sup>18</sup> What remains to be told is the story of Paul's return to Jerusalem, his imprisonment, and his journey to Rome.

For the Ephesian disciples, speaking in tongues symbolises the reversal of Babel, the end of their confusion. Prophesying—declaring the word of God while possessed by the Spirit—represents their empowerment for mission. These disciples are set before the reader in contrast to the Babel-like Ephesian mob, who shout in mindless unison or yell different things in a state of confusion, with no-one present to proclaim the word of God (Acts 19:30-32, 34). The attesting signs also point to the convergence of the complementary ministries of the disciples of John and Jesus. The Ephesian disciples now

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<sup>18</sup> Compare the *inclusio* formed by Peter's sermon and Stephen's defence around the church's opening witness in Jerusalem (section 2.3.1).

do as the apostles did: they receive the Spirit as a group, speak in tongues and prophesy (19:7; cf. 2:4, 16-18).

### **2.3.5 Saul's Conversion**

We turn now to the account of Saul's conversion, the only one of the five passages from Acts which tells of an individual being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:17), and the only one that is not an inaugural event. If inaugural events are group events, and if they are unique moments in the extension of the kingdom of God, it will be Saul's experience that aligns most closely with the later situation of Luke and his readers. It is important, therefore, to consider whether Saul was converted on the road to Damascus or later, the relationship between his recovery of sight and his filling with the Spirit, and what indications there are that he may have, for example, spoken in tongues. There are several parallel events which can shed light on what takes place.

#### **Some parallel events**

Is there, first, a link between Saul's conversion and the death and resurrection of Jesus? Wall thinks that "'three days' of abstinence nicely symbolises Saul's conversion to the *resurrected* Jesus" (Wall, 2002, p. 151; italics in original). Keener is more cautious:

Some scholars suggest that Luke specifies three days to connect Paul's blindness and restoration with the time between Jesus's death and resurrection. The text, however, connects the three days most explicitly with the fasting, and (as already noted) three days was a common duration for fasts. Had Luke intended an analogy with resurrection (in itself a not implausible suggestion), perhaps we could have

expected him to connect the three days more explicitly with regaining sight, not just with the duration of blindness (Keener, 2013, pp. 1643-1644).

But what if we consider both fasting and blindness? The text says that *for three days* [Saul] *was without sight, and neither ate nor drank* (Acts 9:9). Taken together, these constitute a convincing analogy of death. Luke also tells us that Saul took nourishment after his sight was restored. He tells us the same about Jesus after his resurrection (9:18-19; cf. Luke 24:42-43). Luke's Saul is indeed enacting a parallel to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the three days of blindness and fasting mark the transition between Saul's old life and his new life as a follower of Jesus.

Second, there is an unmistakable parallel between Saul's conversion and the story of Jonah. Jonah sets out on a journey in rebellion against God, and Saul sets out to persecute the church (Jon 1:3; Acts 9:1-2). God intervenes to stop Jonah, and Jesus intervenes to stop Saul (Jon 1:4; Acts 9:3-6). Jonah falls into darkness inside the fish; Saul falls into the darkness of blindness (Jon 1:15, 17; Acts 9:4, 8). Jonah remains in the dark for three days, unable to eat or drink; Saul is unable to see for three days, and neither eats nor drinks (Jon 1:17; Acts 9:9). Jonah prays in the darkness; Saul prays in his blindness (Jon 2:1-9; Acts 9:11). Jonah acknowledges God's just judgment: *I am driven away from your sight* (Jon 2:4; cf. 1:12). Saul prays in the same situation, blinded under divine judgment and dismissed from the presence of Christ (Acts 9:6, 8; cf. 13:9-11). Jonah's prayer is heard; so is Saul's (Jon 2:7, 10; Acts 9:11). God commands the fish to deliver Jonah (Jon 2:10a); likewise Christ instructs Ananias to restore Saul (Acts 9:11-16). Jonah is ejected from the fish and returns to the light (Jon 2:10b); *something like fish scales* (CEV; cf. Lev

11:9 LXX; BDAG, “λεπίς”, 1, p. 592)<sup>19</sup> fall from Saul’s eyes and he sees again (Acts 9:18). Following his deliverance Jonah declares the word of God in Gentile Nineveh (Jon 3:3-4), and Saul proclaims Jesus in Gentile Damascus (Acts 9:20).

Luke here is modelling Saul on the Old Testament prophet to the Gentiles. He wants us to see the contrast as well as the similarity. Jonah began as a reluctant “missionary,” whereas Saul was an active persecutor. Jonah continued to resist God (Jon 4), while Saul was transformed into a wholehearted follower of Christ. The change in Saul is greater than in Jonah. What is clear, though, is that Jonah 1–3 describes the process by which Jonah was reduced from rebellion to reluctant obedience, and Acts 9:1-20 describes the corresponding process by which Saul was converted from a bitter persecutor to an ardent proclaimer of Christ.

Saul’s conversion has a third parallel in the story of Elymas the sorcerer. Elymas is described as an *enemy of all righteousness* who withstands the truth, and the same was certainly true of Saul (Acts 9:1; 13:8, 10). Both are confronted by the power of God (9:3-6; 13:9-11). Both suffer blindness for a time (9:9; 13:11). Each has to be led by the hand (χειραγωγοῦντες, 9:8; χειραγωγούς, 13:11). Each suffers a penalty matching their offence. Saul brings men with him to lead captives, bound and helpless, to be dealt with in Jerusalem. Instead, the same men lead Saul himself, blind and helpless, to be dealt with at Damascus (9:6, 8). Elymas has been blinding others spiritually; now he is blinded himself. He has been making straight paths crooked for others; now he gropes this way and that for someone to guide him (13:10-11; Keener, 2013, p. 2024).

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<sup>19</sup> This is in disagreement with BDAG, which lists Acts 9:18 under meaning 2, *scale*, in the sense of a thin, flaky piece.

Saul was blinded by the brilliant light he saw on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:11), but this was not merely a medical event. It was an act of divine chastening, just as it was for Elymas. Nor was Saul's recovery of sight merely a miracle of healing. Rather, it marked the end of his chastening. It was the completion of a process which involved conviction, repentance, turning to God, and the declaration of divine forgiveness: in other words, Saul's conversion and salvation.

Zechariah provides a final parallel. Zechariah was chastened as Saul was, struck dumb for a period by God—a penalty corresponding to his words of disbelief (Luke 1:18-20). As with Saul, the penalty was lifted (1:64), and Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:67). What is significant is that the intervening verses (1:65-66; placed here rather than following Zechariah's prophecy) make it clear that Zechariah's recovery of speech and his prophesying are two distinct events (logically and possibly chronologically) rather than two aspects of a single event. In the same way, Saul's filling with the Spirit should not be conflated with his recovery of sight.

The foregoing discussion tells against any claim that Saul was converted on the road to Damascus and baptised in the Spirit three days later. And likewise, while Saul's recovery of sight marked an end to his chastening, it did not constitute a sign of possession by the Spirit. This would have involved the Spirit taking over his faculties, evidenced perhaps by ecstatic speech, or prophetic speech like Zechariah's.

Arrington (1999, p. 658) thinks there was some such sign: "Most likely [Saul] receives the Pentecostal experience as Ananias lays his hands on him." But how, in the absence of

an explicit statement by Luke, can we gain more clarity? Table 4 offers a way forward.

This table lists the accounts of conversion and/or miraculous Spirit baptism in Acts.

**Table 4. Conversion and Miraculous Spirit Baptism in Acts**

Account	Event	Firstfruits for Category	Attesting Signs Specified?	Received as a Group?	Explicit Apostolic Leadership?	Speaking in Tongues Specified?	Laying on of Hands Specified?	Delay after Believing before Miraculous Signs?	Delay after Baptism before Miraculous Signs?
<i>Firstfruits</i>									
Acts 1:14-2:4	Pentecost	Yes – Jews	Yes	Yes	Yes. Peter and the eleven	Yes	No	Yes	– <sup>20</sup>
Acts 8:12-19	City of Samaria	Yes – Samaritans	Yes	Yes	Yes. Peter, John	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Acts 10:44-48	Caesarea	Yes – Gentiles	Yes	Yes	Yes. Peter	Yes	No	No	No (before baptism)
Acts 19:1-7	Ephesus	Yes – Disciples of John	Yes	Yes	Yes. Paul	Yes	Yes	No	No

<sup>20</sup> Luke has no account of the apostles and their companions receiving baptism.

<i>Individual Conversions</i>									
Acts 8:26-40	Ethiopian eunuch	No	No	–	No. (Philip)	No	No	–	– <sup>21</sup>
Acts 9:1-19	Saul	No	No	No	No. (Ananias)	No	Yes	No	No <sup>22</sup>
Acts 16:13-15	Lydia	No	No	–	Yes. Paul (+ others)	No	No	–	–
Acts 16:25-34	Philippian jailer	No	No	–	Yes. Paul (+ Silas)	No	No	–	– <sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Some Western text witnesses say that *the Holy Spirit fell on the eunuch, and an angel carried Philip away*. A case might be made (assuming the historicity of this version of events) that Luke could not have known about this unless there were attesting signs. However Metzger (1994, p. 316) and Comfort (2008, p. 364) concur that the variant reading here has inferior support.

<sup>22</sup> Saul sees, eats and drinks nothing for three days, paralleling the death and resurrection of Christ. Like Jonah inside the fish, he acknowledges his guilt, seeks God in prayer, and receives divine deliverance. This is a process of conversion. The only miraculous sign recorded happens before Saul’s baptism. His restored sight marked the end of a period of divine chastisement. It is the restoration of a faculty rather than a sign attesting the use of his faculties by the unseen, indwelling Spirit as a “possessed” person.

<sup>23</sup> What about Apollos, who “knew only the baptism of John?” Unlike the disciples in chapter 19, he has been instructed in the way of the Lord (18:24), and Luke casts him as a second Paul. Both teach the way of the Lord and speak boldly in the synagogue (18:25-26; 19:8-9). Apollos teaches accurately about Christ; and Paul teaches accurately about John (18:25; 19:4). Paul leaves Ephesus and strengthens the disciples (18:21-23); so does Apollos (18:27). Throughout, Apollos remains a disciple of John.



<i>Other Group Conversions</i>									
Acts 2:37-41	Pentecost	No	No	–	Yes. Peter	No	No	–	–
Acts 2:47	After Pentecost	No	No	–	No	No	No	–	–
Acts 6:7	Jerusalem	No	No	–	No	No	No	–	–
Acts 9:32-35	Lydda	No	No	–	Yes. Peter	No	No	–	–
Acts 9:36-42	Joppa	No	No	–	Yes. Peter	No	No	–	–
Acts 11:19-21	Antioch	No	No	–	No.	No	No	–	–
Acts 12:24	Not specified	No	No	–	No.	No	No	–	–
Acts 13:43, 48-49	Pisidian Antioch	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, Barnabas	No	No	–	–
Acts 14:1	Iconium	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, Barnabas	No	No	–	–

Acts 14:20	Lystra	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, Barnabas	No	No	–	–
Acts 14:21	Derbe	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, Barnabas	No	No	–	–
Acts 16:5	Pisidia	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, (+ Timothy)	No	No	–	–
Acts 16:40	Philippi	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, (+ others)	No	No	–	–
Acts 17:1-4	Thessalonica	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, (+ others)	No	No	–	–
Acts 17:10-12	Berea	No	No	–	Yes. Paul, (+ Silas)	No	No	–	–
Acts 17:33	Athens	No	No	–	Yes. Paul	No	No	–	–
Acts 18:8	Corinth	No	No	–	Yes. Paul	No	No	–	–
Acts 19:8-10	Ephesus	No	No	–	Yes. Paul	No	No	–	–

**Attesting signs: examining the data**

From table 4, several things become apparent.

- a. Most accounts of group conversions (18 at least, Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus being contested) say nothing of any subsequent Spirit baptism with attesting miracles.
- b. There is no record of any *individual* receiving Spirit baptism with attesting miracles, which is surprising if this is the normative individual experience.
- c. In the four “paradigm” instances (Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea, Ephesus):
  - i. speaking in tongues is not always specified;
  - ii. laying on of hands is not always specified;
  - iii. a delay after believing is not always specified;
  - iv. a delay after baptism is not always specified.

Various workarounds are required to deal with the gaps in the data by those who wish to attach Spirit baptism to speaking in tongues, water baptism or confirmation.

If we treat Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus as commissioning-empowerment events subsequent to conversion, we have to consider why we never read of individual Christians receiving this normative individual experience. If we treat all four as conversion-initiation events, we need to ask why these four in particular are accompanied by miraculous evidence of Spirit baptism, while none of the others is. With both approaches gaps and apparent inconsistencies must be addressed so that the paradigm works.

This might be done by assuming what is not stated, as Arrington does above.

Alternatively, instances that conform to the chosen paradigm may be privileged as “normal,” while counter-instances are labelled “abnormal” or “interim.” Bruner (1970, pp. 177-178), for example, asserts that at Samaria, “To be baptized and not to have received the Spirit was an abnormality ... The Spirit is temporarily suspended from baptism here ‘only’ and precisely to teach the church ... that *suspension cannot occur*” (italics in original). Other workarounds subject to the same objections include making commissioning-empowerment “dockable” with conversion-initiation—i.e., allowing Spirit baptism to occur on the same occasion by treating it as *logically*, whether or not chronologically, subsequent (Stronstad, 2012, pp. 72-73), or making conversion-initiation “stretchable,” so that the initiation process can extend to cover a situation such as Samaria (Turner, 2000, pp. 374-375).

However, table 4 indicates a way to deal with the data in a relatively straightforward manner. The highlighted cells indicate what is common to the events listed in the first four rows. This allows us to draw the following conclusions about these events:

- a. Spirit baptism with attesting signs is always a group event and occurs under apostolic oversight. It is never recorded for individual believers.
- b. Spirit baptism with attesting signs is restricted to the firstfruits of a category of believers. It is reported in no other context.
- c. Spirit baptism with attesting signs need not happen at the point of conversion.
- d. Spirit baptism with attesting signs is not tied to baptism or laying on of hands. It can occur before the one and without the other.

This is not to deny that in Luke's theology later Christian believers are also incorporated into the temple of the Spirit, or that the Spirit's coming brings empowerment, as it evidently does for Saul (Acts 9:20-22). What can be said is that there are insufficient grounds in Acts to claim that signs such as speaking in tongues are normative for individual Christians as part of Spirit baptism.

### **2.3.6 Common Threads**

We can now consolidate what has been said to this point, and introduce some further material. In Luke's pneumatology, the theophany at Pentecost represents the dedication of a new temple, in which the Spirit indwells believers. Pentecost is the feast of firstfruits, and in the course of Acts the firstfruits of four communities—Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John—are incorporated into the renewed Israel and into this living temple. The phenomena which accompany these events, such as speaking in tongues, are signs attesting possession by the Spirit. Each of these events is both *corporate* and *inaugural*: no Spirit baptism accompanied by attesting signs is recorded either for any individual or for later converts from the same group of people.

### **Honour-shame and allegiance**

In an honour-shame society such as Graeco-Roman culture, honour was a zero-sum commodity. If someone's honour increased, someone else's decreased accordingly (Oakman, 1998, p. 181). Many social interactions took the form of challenge and riposte, where the parties jockeyed for reputation and social standing. An individual's identity and honour were embedded in the group to which he or she belonged, and the head of the

group—family, state, various brotherhoods, etc.—embodied that honour and was owed total obedience (Simkins, 2000, p. 603).

Jesus demanded an allegiance which overrode every other: even family ties, the strongest social bonds, had to come second (Luke 8:19-21; 9:57-62; 14:26-27; 18:28-30; Pilch & Malina, 1998, p. xxvii; Osiek, 1998, p. 177; Plevnik, 1998, p. 112). He asserted honour claims of the highest order, both political and religious (Acts 2:33-36).<sup>24</sup> As a result, the growth of his community constituted a challenge to the existing powers. Within Israel, Luke portrays Jerusalem as the centre of persecuting power and Samaria as the centre of syncretistic religion. Among the Gentiles, Caesarea symbolises oppressive power and Ephesus pagan religion. In each of these cities inaugural Spirit baptisms take place, and counter-episodes also occur, arising from the demands for loyalty which the claims of Jesus challenge.

In a group-oriented culture, transfer of allegiance from one's own community to some other group was seen as shameful. Steuhrenberg writes as follows:

Tacitus (b. ca. 55 C.E.) considered those who were attracted to Judaism “the worst rascals,” for they renounced their ancestral religions and sent contributions to Jerusalem. The Jews, he said, were extremely loyal toward one another, but toward everyone else they exhibited only hatred and enmity. They adopted circumcision to distinguish themselves from other peoples. Moreover, those who converted to their ways followed the same practices, so that the earliest lesson

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<sup>24</sup> This is not to imply that the distinction between politics and religion was as clear-cut as in the modern West. However, Jesus' followers confronted both opposing force and conflicting beliefs.

they received was “to despise the gods, to disown their country, and to regard their parents, children, and brothers as of little account” (*Hist.* 5.5) (Steuhrenberg, 1992, p. 504).

Nevertheless, those who become followers of Jesus do so with honour. Why is this? First, their new allegiance is warranted by divine revelation. At Jerusalem Jesus is the Lord and Messiah promised in the psalms (Acts 2:22-36). For the Samaritans he is the same Davidic Messiah (8:5) to whom they, no less than the Jews, owe allegiance. At Caesarea an angel instructs Cornelius to send for Peter, and the Spirit tells Peter to go to Cornelius (10:4-5, 19-20). And at Ephesus John’s disciples learn that Jesus was the one to whom John had prophetically directed his hearers (19:4; cf. Luke 7:26-27). Second, those who accept allegiance to Jesus are a representative group acting together, not individuals open to the charge of acting on their own.

Third, as we foreshadowed earlier (section 2.2), the signs attesting possession by the Spirit are reported precisely (and only) where, in this honour-shame culture, attestation is most needed. They confirm the legitimacy (honour) of allegiance to Jesus by demonstrating divine acceptance of these firstfruits (cf. Plevnik, 1998, p. 108). They are incorporated into the living temple of the Spirit. At the same time this divine endorsement validates Jesus’ overriding claim for allegiance. This invalidates the conflicting claims of the opposing groups, and opens the way for adherence to Jesus to all those within those communities.

The honour accorded to Jesus and his followers is matched by the shame suffered by their opponents. The Jewish leaders lose face publicly through their failed efforts to suppress

the church (Acts 4:21, 31; 5:18-26, 40-42; cf. Luke 14:28-30; Plevnik, 1998, pp. 107-108, 112): even outright persecution proves ineffective (8:1, 4). Simon is overwhelmed by Peter's denunciation, and has to plead for intercession with God (Acts 8:18-24). Herod suffers an ignominious death, *eaten by worms* (12:25); and Demetrius' efforts to raise a riot end in farce and futility (19:23-41).

### **Attesting signs and counter-episodes**

In three cities (Samaria is the exception) the coming of the Spirit is said to be attested by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). This symbol of Babel's confusion now stands for the reversal of Babel. Previously diverse peoples become united and empowered for mission as they turn to God and the Messiah.

In each of the four cities those who believe in Jesus are set in contrast with a group where φωνή μία πᾶσιν, *one voice/speech for all* (Gen 11:1 LXX), the symbol of humanity's ancient unity, now represents false unity, built on force or wrong belief, and still subject to the confusion and futility of Babel. In Acts 7:57 it is the φωνή μεγάλη, *loud shout* of the Sanhedrin as they rush upon Stephen. In 8:10 the Samaritans, from the least to the greatest, call Simon *the power of God that is called Great*. At Caesarea Herod's audience keep calling out, "*The voice of a god, and not of a mortal!*" (12:22). And at Ephesus the crowd shouts in unison (φωνή ... μία ἐκ πάντων), "*Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!*" (19:34).

The remaining attesting signs also serve to distinguish the group which believes in Jesus from the group which does not. The disciples at Pentecost declare God's deeds of power (Acts 2:11). This is power which the Sanhedrin's violent abuse of power is unable to



thwart (7:58-60; 8:1, 4). Cornelius and his friends extol God (10:46), while Herod's audience extols Herod, only to see him struck down (12:22-23). The Ephesian disciples prophesy, declaring messages from God (19:6). On the other hand the Ephesian rioters shout—some one thing and some another—with Paul absent and no word from God to be heard (19:30-32).

In Samaria, uniquely, the “one voice” episode (where Simon is being praised as *the power of God that is called Great*) takes place *before* the gospel is proclaimed, and it involves the same group of people who believe in Jesus (Acts 8:10, 12). There is a reason for this. Luke considers the Samaritans to be Israelites. Accordingly, their response to Philip's preaching matches the response to Peter's preaching in Acts 2. The Samaritans are amazed (ἐξίστημι, Acts 8:9, 11) by Simon's magic, and the crowd who gather at Pentecost are amazed (ἐξίστημι, Acts 2:7, 12) by the disciples speaking in tongues. In both cases, the confusion disappears once Christ is proclaimed. Luke even portrays the Samaritans as responding more wholeheartedly than the Jews. No-one mocks Philip (8:6; cf. 2:13), and the response to his message is universal (8:10-12; cf. 2:41). Even Simon truly repents. As elsewhere in Luke-Acts, Luke is comparing the Samaritans favourably with the Jews (cf. Luke 10:30-37; 17:15-18).

Also, uniquely, Luke does not tell us how the Spirit's coming at Samaria is manifested. When Luke specifies attesting signs, he does so not to establish norms for later believers, but to highlight the difference between two contrasting groups. A group speaking in tongues will be matched with another speaking with “one voice”. But at Samaria there is no separate group, and the “one voice” confusion has already been resolved. Tongues, in

particular, is a sign of unity among diverse groups, but the main theme of the episode at Samaria is the reunion of Israel and Judah, one people with the same language.

### **Group episodes**

The fact that on each occasion the Spirit comes upon a group, together with the fact that each group is contrasted with a group which acts in unison, makes it clear that Luke has in mind people functioning corporately rather than as individuals. In Acts the accounts of baptism in the Holy Spirit attested by miraculous signs are all group episodes, and each is a unique occasion in salvation history. As firstfruits, each group foreshadows the transfer of all authority to Christ against every competing power as the kingdom of God pursues its course to the ends of the earth.

## **2.4 Implications for the Dunn Debate**

The interpretive findings articulated so far in this chapter provide a perspective for looking afresh at the passages discussed by Dunn and his critics. In this section, once again, Saul's conversion will be considered last because of its distinctive nature as a non-inaugural event. A final subsection will discuss some overall implications.

### **2.4.1 *Jesus at the Jordan***

Pentecostal writers have argued that Jesus' anointing at the Jordan was a second experience of the Spirit. It is unimaginable, it is said, that from the beginning he was less full of the Spirit than John the Baptist (Luke 1:15; Dunn, 1970, pp. 23-24). Bolt (1991, p. 64) correctly objects that this is eisegesis: Luke 1:35 links the Holy Spirit's activity

with Mary rather than directly with Jesus. Ervin's alternative argument, that Jesus was conceived by the Spirit in the same way that believers experience spiritual rebirth (Ervin, 1984, p. 6), is open to the charge of importing Johannine theology into Luke.

Dunn's espousal of Conzelmann's three epochs allows him to argue that "the descent of the Spirit at both Jordan and Pentecost marked the beginning of decisive new stages" which made them "uniquely unrepeatable" since "[the] beginning event of an epoch can be repeated within that epoch, but not in its character as *beginning*" (Dunn, 1993, p. 16). The criticisms levelled at this view by Shelton, Menzies and Atkinson (subsection 1.2.1) are essentially sound, although I would question Menzies' view that the Spirit in Luke's pneumatology always functions as the Spirit of prophecy (Menzies, 1994a, p. 121). For example, it is strained to present the Spirit as the source not so much of Mary's conception as of her words of prophecy (Luke 1:35, 46-55) (Menzies, 1994a, pp. 115-116; Atkinson, 2011, p. 75). And while I agree with Menzies that Luke does not present the Spirit as the agent of *conversion*, baptism in the Spirit repeatedly occurs in the context of Christian *initiation* (Acts 2:38; 9:17-18; 10:44-48; 19:5-6), a matter which will be discussed below.

#### **2.4.2 Pentecost**

Dunn and his dialogue partners are correct in reminding each other that passages in Luke-Acts must be interpreted first in the context of the work to which they belong, rather than basing interpretations on external passages such as Romans 8:9 and John 20:22 (Dunn, 1970, pp. 38-40; Ervin, 1984, pp. 25-26).

For Dunn, the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost is a conversion-initiation event, but there are serious difficulties with this view. He argues that *the last days* of Acts 2:17-21 refer to the beginning of the church epoch at Pentecost, when the disciples are initiated into the new covenant and become Christians for the first time (Dunn, 1996, pp. 40, 46-49). However, as Turner points out in subsection 1.2.2 on Pentecost, this is to ignore the eschatological character of the τέρατα and σημεῖα in the ministry of Jesus. Nor is Dunn (1970, p. 54) correct when he says that ἡ ἐπαγγελία (Acts 2:33, 39) refers to the promise of the covenant and is never directly linked with a promise of power. Menzies and Petts convincingly demonstrate the contrary in the same subsection.

Stronstad (2012, p. 58) claims that at least some of the 120 at Pentecost were believers, since they had been disciples of John and therefore had repented and been forgiven of their sins. But this is hypothetical. Why does Luke not make the point? In any event Dunn (1970, p. 53) does not deny that the disciples were believers before Pentecost. What he contests is that they were already *Christian* believers. Nevertheless, Stronstad is on the right track: how defensible is Dunn's view given the disciples had witnessed Jesus' resurrection and ascension?

Stronstad further contends that Jesus at the Jordan and the disciples at Pentecost experienced a parallel "physical manifestation of the Spirit" (Stronstad, 2012, p. 58). However this does not explain why, in the case of Jesus, there are no parallel phenomena such as tongues—or why there is no record of a theophany at Samaria, Caesarea, or Ephesus.

The differences may be accounted for as follows. Jesus, and only Jesus, is said to have been *anointed* by the coming of the Spirit (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38). The theophany at the Jordan was a divine anointing of Jesus for his kingly ministry as the Davidic Messiah and Servant of YHWH (Luke 3:21-22; cf. Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1) (Culpepper, 1995, p. 91). On the other hand, as detailed in subsection 2.1.1, the theophany at Pentecost was the dedication of a living temple, with the Spirit coming to indwell a renewed Israel—an event which, like the dedication of Solomon’s Temple, occurred only once. Speaking in tongues and declaring God’s mighty deeds were signs attesting the Spirit’s “possession” of the firstfruits of the Jews, and therefore confirming their inclusion in the renewed Israel and participation in the temple of the Spirit (section 2.3). The phenomena at Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus then attested the inclusion of the Samaritans, Gentiles and disciples of John respectively.

### **2.4.3 Samaria**

The pentecostal position that the Samaritans were first converted and subsequently filled with the Spirit is *prima facie* compelling. To deflect this argument Dunn challenges the evidence that the Samaritans were in fact converted under the ministry of Philip. However, his case is not a strong one. The criticisms of Dunn set out in subsection 1.2.3 on Samaria are persuasive, and there is no need to reiterate them here. Turner’s alternative view (in the same subsection) of an extended conversion-initiation process which includes *both* the Samaritans’ faith and baptism *and* the gift of the Spirit has its own problems, given that he claims, as follows, that Acts 2:38-39 is paradigmatic:

The natural understanding of Acts 2.38-39 would be that as a rule of thumb the Spirit will from now on be given by God to those who repent and are baptized,

without further conditions (for none is specified) and without delay (for none is implied) (Turner, 2000, p. 358).

Montague comments appropriately:

T.'s [i.e., Turner's] explanation of the anomaly of Acts 8 appears no better than Dunn's. T. points to the fact that during Jesus' public ministry and in the ten days' lapse before Pentecost the disciples had not received the Spirit (except by the external influence of Jesus, who had the Spirit), and yet they were surely "saved." But this assumes that the pre-Pentecostal Christian experience of the disciples could be admitted as legitimation, even if by way of exception, for post-Pentecostal Christian initiation, which seems to defeat T.'s argument about the normativity of Acts 2:38-39 and returns to the classical Pentecostal position T. is trying to revise (Montague, 1998, p. 178).

In relation to Dunn's claim that Simon was a false convert, Menzies (1994a, p. 209) and Turner (2000, pp. 366-367) point out, quite reasonably, that believers, too, can sin. I would add, as detailed in subsection 2.3.2, that when Peter tells Simon he is *in the gall of bitterness* (Acts 8:23), he is alluding to Deuteronomy 29:17 LXX, which is not a condemnation of the wicked, but part of a warning to those in danger of falling away.

Luke states explicitly that the Samaritan believers had to wait for the Spirit to come upon them, just as the disciples did before the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4; 8:16). This is the pattern that many pentecostals regard as normative for all believers. However, this can be explained quite differently. In each place the firstfruits of the group had to wait until the

circumstances were in place for their inaugural reception of the Spirit: the feast of firstfruits in the case of the Jews, reunion with (the renewed) Israel in the case of the Samaritans. The parallel is one instance among others where Luke places the Samaritans on the same level as the Jews. No such factors apply to the Spirit baptisms at Caesarea and Ephesus and, on those occasions, Luke mentions no delay.

#### **2.4.4 Caesarea**

Stronstad (2012, pp. 74-75) argues that Cornelius and his friends were Christians before Peter arrived. Cornelius is upright and well-regarded by the Jews, and he and his household are devout fearers of God (Acts 10:2, 22), who together with his close friends have formed a house church. As Dunn (1970, pp. 79-80) points out, this is highly implausible since Cornelius was told to send for Peter, who would bring *a message by which you and your entire household will be saved* (Acts 11:14).

Dunn (1970, p. 80) then claims that the Spirit fell when Peter was speaking about forgiveness (Acts 10:43-44), which implies that his hearers sought forgiveness and the Spirit came as the bearer of that forgiveness. But to this Petts (1987, pp. 70-71) rightly objects that there is no New Testament evidence that speaking in tongues (10:46) is a sign of forgiveness, though the presence of the Spirit certainly *confirms* that Cornelius and his friends have been forgiven.

Turner agrees that charismatic speech (Acts 10:46) contains elements that cannot be explained as signs of forgiveness (Turner, 2000, pp. 381-382), but he elaborates as follows on speaking in tongues:

[Luke] never suggests, in the twenty-six chapters that follow the Pentecost account, that xenolalia was ever identified as recognized languages again, nor that they played any part in evangelism. Consequently, two major and oft-repeated objections to Lucan historicity on the issue of tongues—namely that Paul does not think of tongues as evangelistic, nor does he think of them as intelligible—simply fall to the ground ... From the evidence we have it would not even be possible to be sure that Luke thought that *all* tongues-speech was xenolalia as opposed to some wider concept of tongues-speech (cf. Paul's *genē glōssōn* “different kinds of tongues”; 1 Cor 12:10) (Turner, 1999, pp. 221-222).

Since the Spirit comes upon people at Pentecost and Samaria who are already believers, I find it implausible that Spirit baptism itself conveys forgiveness. However, I differ from Turner about xenolalia. Not only at Pentecost, but also at Caesarea and Ephesus, the group speaking in tongues is set in contrast to another group crying out with one voice in a way analogous to the people of Babel. The implication is that for Luke “speaking in tongues” always refers to the linguistic reversal of Babel and therefore xenolalia. There is no evidence that Luke has in mind Paul's ongoing gifts of “different kinds of tongues” or “tongues of angels” (1 Cor 12:10; 13:1). In the passage just quoted Turner, in the pursuit of harmonisation, is importing Pauline concepts into Luke.

#### **2.4.5 Ephesus**

Dunn and his critics debate three central propositions about Paul's meeting with the Ephesian disciples. First, Dunn challenges the view of some pentecostals (e.g., Stronstad, 2012, p. 79) that these disciples were Christians before Paul met them. They might be



μαθηταί, *disciples* (Acts 19:1), but Luke calls them μαθηταί without using an article, which would be the expected usage if they belonged to a local Christian community (Dunn, 1970, p. 86). This is a tenuous argument, and Ervin's refutation, outlined in subsection 1.2.6 on Ephesus, is sufficient. Dunn fails to demonstrate that these disciples could not have been Christians. But to deny Dunn's argument is not to establish the opposite position. John, as well as Jesus, had disciples (Luke 5:33; 7:18), and he had told them to believe in the coming one. Paul identifies the coming one as Jesus and, *on hearing this*, the Ephesian disciples are baptised in his name (Acts 19:4-5). This is not the response of people who were believers in Jesus already.

A second point of contention is Paul's question in Acts 19:2, "*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?*" Pentecostals commonly conclude from this question that Paul believes it possible to be a Christian without having received the Spirit (Williams, 2002, p. 357; Menzies, 1994a, p. 223). Dunn concludes the opposite. What Paul wants to know is whether these disciples are believers: he considers it impossible to be a Christian without having received the Spirit (Dunn, 1970, p. 86).

What prompts Paul's question? Dunn's answer is vague: "There was no evidence in their own bearing or in their company that they had the Spirit" (Dunn, 1970, p. 86). Arrington (1999, p. 720), a pentecostal writer, is also unsure: "We do not know exactly what prompts Paul to ask the question. ... Presumably Paul's questioning of these disciples was preceded by a longer conversation." There is, however, another option. As proposed above in subsection 2.3.4, what prompts Paul's question is his surprise that, given this significant group of disciples, there is no functioning church at Ephesus (cf. Acts 1:8).

There is a basis for this interpretation in the immediate context: Paul knows the situation at Ephesus from his previous visit.

When the disciples answer, “*We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit*” (Acts 19:2), Keener (2015, p. 2819) does not accept their reply at face value. Rather, he appeals to the similar phrase οὐπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα (lit. *for the Spirit was not yet*) in John 7:39 where the word “given” is commonly supplied in translation (NIV, NASB, ESV, GNB). He concludes that the disciples *had* heard that there is a Holy Spirit, but not that the Spirit had been *given* at Pentecost. Paul’s second question, “*Into what then were you baptized?*” (Acts 19:3) therefore assumes that anyone baptised by Christians (who were eager for the Spirit’s empowerment) would know about Pentecost.

Keener’s interpretation appears convoluted. Paul’s second question is entirely understandable considering that both John and the first Christians taught about the Spirit as part of their baptismal message (Luke 3:16; Acts 2:38). The problem is not that these disciples have yet to hear about Pentecost; the problem is that they have not properly understood John. We saw above (subsection 2.3.4) that Apollos and Paul carry out complementary ministries. Apollos, a follower of John, carries out the mission of Jesus. Paul, a follower of Jesus, carries out the mission of John. He delivers John’s message, speaking about the Holy Spirit and directing his hearers to the coming one. We also saw that John and his followers give way to Jesus and his followers: just as Apollos needs Priscilla and Aquila to explain the Christian message more accurately, so the Ephesian disciples need Paul to explain John’s message more completely.

The third point of contention is whether the proceedings in Acts 19:5-6 should be thought of as one event or two. Dunn (1970, p. 87-88) considers them to be one ceremony, whereas Ervin (1984, p. 65) sees two distinct events. In my judgement Ervin has the better of the argument from syntax, which is set out in subsection 1.2.6. But this leaves open the issue of whether the two events normally go together. If Dunn's exegesis is shaped by his belief that the coming of the Spirit marks the point at which a person becomes a Christian, Ervin's is shaped by a paradigm which requires a second event which can sometimes be deferred. This paradigm is required to account for Pentecost and Samaria. But in each of these cases unique factors apply. In the remaining instances where Spirit baptism is spoken of—Caesarea, Ephesus, Saul's conversion, and Peter's hearers in Acts 2—belief, baptism, and the gift of the Spirit appear to go together. So while Ervin is correct to distinguish the gift of the Spirit from conversion and baptism, it remains legitimate to view all three as aspects of Christian initiation.

#### **2.4.6 Saul's Conversion**

Dunn disagrees with the pentecostal belief that Saul was converted on the road to Damascus and received Spirit baptism three days later. Instead, he contends that what Saul experienced was a conversion-commissioning process which lasted three days and culminated in his being filled with the Spirit (Dunn, 1970, pp. 73, 75, 77-78).

Some of Dunn's supporting arguments are less than conclusive. He thinks that when Ananias greets Saul as *brother* (Acts 9:17) he means "fellow Israelite" rather than "fellow Christian," since Saul has neither received the Spirit nor been baptised (Dunn, 1970, p. 74). But Cornelius received the Spirit without baptism, and to say that Saul was not a believer in Jesus before he received the Spirit is to assume the point at issue.

Similarly, Dunn maintains that when Saul says, “*Who are you, Lord (κύριε)?*” in Acts 9:5 (also 22:8 and 26:15), the meaning is merely “Sir.” Saul can hardly be confessing faith in someone he does not recognise (Dunn, 1970, p. 73). But this opens the door for Ervin to reply that in the parallel account in Acts 22:10 Saul calls Jesus κύριε immediately *after* Jesus has identified himself (Ervin, 1984, p. 42).

Having said this, I believe Dunn’s argument here can be strengthened. Pilch makes the following comment about the use of “lord” in the honour-shame culture of the time:

A “lord” is a person with the right to control other persons totally and at will, with the right of life and death over another, with full rights to the property and being of another. As a title of respect (e.g., Matt 21:3), it denotes great deference (Pilch, 1998b, p. 49).

It is probable that this is the meaning which Luke intends when Saul first addresses Jesus, and there is no evidence that the meaning changes radically between Acts 22:8 and 22:10. Great deference is not yet Christian confession of faith. It is noteworthy that BDAG (“κύριος”, 2.b.γ.1, p. 578), while it includes Acts 9:10-11 and 22:10b in a list of verses where “the word κύριός raises Jesus above the human level,” does not include Acts 9:5 or 22:10a.

The sustained parallel between Saul and Jonah (subsection 2.3.5) is clearly intentional and supports the view that Paul’s conversion took place over a period of three days. It is not enough to say Jonah was a believer before his encounter with the great fish and claim

that Saul, too, was a believer. Jonah was a rebellious prophet, but Saul was a murderous persecutor. The pattern common to both is conviction of sin, repentance, turning to God in prayer, and divine salvation/deliverance (יְשׁוּעָה; σωτήριον; Jon 2:9 / 2:10 MT, LXX) as a result. To say that in Saul's case this had already happened on the Damascus road is to miss the point of the parallel.

Yet if Saul was converted and initiated during this three-day period, he was also commissioned (Acts 9:15-16; 26:16-18; Dunn, 1970, p. 75; Menzies, 1994a, p. 214) and empowered: his powerful witness confirms that he has been filled with the Spirit (1:8; 9:17, 20-22). Conversion, initiation, commissioning and empowerment all occur together in this life-changing experience.

#### **2.4.7 Discussion**

Are the firstfruits of communities who receive the Spirit at Pentecost, Samaria, Ephesus and Caesarea to be thought of as groups or individuals? It is, of course, the case that those involved are individuals. It is equally true that these are all group events. So the point to be determined is whether Luke presents those who receive the Spirit as a collection of individuals, or as people acting as a group in a way appropriate for the group-oriented culture of the time.

The argument advanced here is *first*, that Pentecost was the feast of firstfruits, where the offerings were representative of Israel's coming harvest; *second*, that, correspondingly, those who receive the Spirit as firstfruits represent those from their community who will subsequently believe (Acts 11:17-18); *third*, that speaking in tongues, where this is

reported, is a collective enacted prophecy of the reversal of Babel, where previously diverse groups become one; *fourth*, that at Samaria, where speaking in tongues is not reported, those filled with the Spirit are the firstfruits of the ten tribes, collectively reversing the old division between Judah and Samaria, to result in one, renewed Israel; *fifth*, that the counter-episodes with which these “firstfruits” episodes are paired are also group episodes, identified as such by the collective behaviour of “one speech”; and *sixth*, that the attesting signs serve to legitimate (grant honour to) the transfer of ultimate allegiance to Jesus by those who believe in him. In other words, on these four occasions, those who are baptised by the Spirit receive the Spirit on the same occasion, act jointly, and represent others collectively.

But is there a “both ... and” option? Might we say that these four events unite individuals *as well as* the groups they comprise in the temple of the Spirit, so that there is no occasion for limiting attesting signs to group episodes? This argument has the weakness that there is no record in Acts of attesting signs accompanying Spirit baptism apart from “firstfruit” group events. If we confine ourselves to Acts, for example, there is nothing to substantiate that Saul spoke in tongues when he received the filling of the Spirit in Acts 9. But unless it is assumed that he did, the argument that tongues are the normative evidence of Spirit baptism fails.

However, does the “firstfruits” view make the opposite assumption, that Saul *did not* speak in tongues in Acts 9? This does not follow. The argument that tongues are normative requires two assumptions: one is that information it requires happens not to be reported; the second is that Saul’s speaking in tongues can safely be assumed to fill the gap. The “firstfruits” view, however, need not assume in the first place that Luke has left

out significant information. It predicts that there will be no account of individual or post-initial Spirit baptism accompanied by attesting signs, and the evidence confirms that prediction.

The failure to recognise the unique nature of inaugural events has led some scholars to adopt positions which are fraught with difficulty. For example, Petts (1987, p. 55) correctly points out that “if one example can be shown of [baptism in the Holy Spirit] taking place subsequent to conversion, Dunn’s whole thesis falls to the ground.” This is evidently the case with Samaria, where Dunn’s argument is unable to withstand criticism. Similarly, Stronstad’s position that everyone who receives the Spirit in Acts is already a believer leads to the untenable conclusion that Cornelius and his friends were Christians before Peter came to Caesarea (Stronstad, 2010a, pp. 8-10).

The failure to distinguish between inaugural and subsequent baptisms in the Spirit has also led to difficulties. What Luke describes at Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus are attestations that a new group of believers has been indwelt/possessed by the Spirit. Conflating these unique events with the experience of later believers has meant that the attesting phenomena have been confused with ongoing gifts of the Spirit such as those listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

If, however, the four inaugural events are all unique moments in salvation history, how do we determine the manner in which Spirit baptism relates to conversion and water baptism? It should be evident that even if the timing and phenomena of inaugural events are not normative, these events can still help set boundaries around what is normative in Luke’s pneumatology. Since, for example, there is no instance where Spirit baptism is

said to precede conversion, we may reasonably conclude that belief in Jesus is a prerequisite. The fact that Spirit baptism precedes water baptism at Caesarea and follows it at Samaria is grounds to conclude that for Luke the Spirit is not given *by* baptism in water. The further fact that the gift of the Spirit occurs significantly later than belief at Pentecost and Samaria indicates that Spirit baptism is not presented as *effecting* conversion. And the fact that at both these places unique factors account for the delay in Spirit baptism, while, at the remaining two, Spirit baptism takes place in close proximity to conversion and baptism in water, suggests that for Luke Spirit baptism is normally part of Christian initiation.

In Acts 2:38 the gift of the Spirit is promised to all who repent and are baptised.

According to Dunn (1970, pp. 90, 92), “Luke probably intends Acts 2:38 to establish the pattern and norm for Christian conversion-initiation,” a pattern in which (for Dunn) “the Spirit is the bearer of salvation.” Menzies rejects such a conclusion on the grounds that baptism and the gift of the Spirit are repeatedly separated:

Since Luke fails to develop a strong link between water baptism and the bestowal of the Spirit elsewhere, and regularly separates the rite from the gift (Lk. 3.21-22; Acts 8.12-17; 9.17-18; 10.44; 18.25<sup>25</sup>), the phrase [in Acts 2:38] καὶ λήμψεσθε τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (“and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”) should be interpreted as a promise that the Spirit shall be “imparted to those who are already converted and baptized.” The most that can be gleaned from the text is that repentance and water baptism are the normal prerequisites for

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<sup>25</sup> I believe this is the intended reference (compare Menzies’ discussion on p. 221). The verse given is 18:24.



reception of the Spirit, which is promised to every believer (Menzies, 1994a, pp. 203-204).

However, more needs to be said regarding the texts cited by Menzies. First, in Acts 8:12-17 the separation between baptism and receiving the Spirit occurs because this is an inaugural event where the delay is due to unique circumstances (subsection 2.3.2).

Second, in Acts 18:25 I understand ζέων τῷ πνεύματι to mean *with burning zeal* (BDAG, “ζέω”, p. 426). The point of Acts 18:24-28 is that a follower of John is carrying out the mission of Jesus, just as Paul in the following verses carries out the mission of John.

Whether or when Apollos was baptised in the name of Jesus or received Spirit baptism is not addressed by Luke. And third, the remaining passages do link water baptism closely to baptism in the Spirit.

Luke 3:21-22 in particular narrates Jesus’ baptism and his anointing as the Davidic Messiah (Ps 2:7; also Luke 3:23 with 2 Sam 5:3-4). In the honour-shame culture of the first century, to be baptised in the name of Jesus meant to accept his total authority as head (“Fictive kinship”, 2002; Malina & Neyrey, 1991, pp. 40-41) and to imitate/re-enact his life (Neyrey, 1998, pp. 95, 97; cf. 1 Cor 11:1). Jesus’ baptism and anointing were therefore paradigmatic: to be a follower of Jesus was to participate in his messianic mission in the power of the same Spirit. This is why in both Acts 2:38 and 9:17-18 (the most normative examples we have) receiving the Spirit, although separate from baptism, occurs as part of Christian initiation.

“Initiation” does not mean that for Luke the gift of the Spirit brings conversion. Atkinson (2011, p. 43) correctly argues that baptism in the Spirit results in empowerment for

witness: “If, as Dunn rightly observes, Acts 2:38 has programmatic importance for Christian initiation, then surely Acts 1:8 is equally programmatic in Luke’s eyes for the significance of Spirit reception within that initiation.” Nor should “initiation” be stretched (e.g., by appealing to events at Samaria) so as to allow an indefinite delay before Spirit baptism which makes it an uncertain attainment. If Acts 2:38 is programmatic, then the promise *you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*, “appears to follow inevitably” (Keener, 2012, p. 985). And nor, finally, does including Spirit baptism in Christian initiation imply that Luke regards miraculous manifestations such as speaking in tongues as normative for all Christians. Luke records these signs only for inaugural corporate events.

## Conclusion

Since James Dunn published *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* in 1970, the ongoing debate with his mostly pentecostal dialogue partners has centred on whether Spirit baptism should be considered a *conversion-initiation* event where the coming of the Spirit brings forgiveness or a *commissioning-empowerment* event where the Spirit brings empowerment for mission. This dissertation has focused on five instances of Spirit baptism in Acts, and concluded that with the exception of Saul's conversion they are events of *corporate inauguration*.

The inaugural Spirit baptisms at Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus are for Luke *unique strategic events* in the outworking of the divine plan. They mark the advance of the kingdom of God as it comes to Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles and disciples of John respectively. They are *corporate events*, in which the firstfruits of each of the above groups is admitted to the renewed Israel and received into the temple of the Spirit. The group phenomena which accompany them are best explained as *one-off signs attesting the coming of the Spirit*, not enduring gifts resulting from the Spirit's coming. They are *evidence of unity in the Spirit among diverse groups*, not, as in Paul's writings, evidence of diverse gifts among united believers.

These inaugural events are not shameful renunciations of loyalty to a group to whom allegiance is owed. They are warranted by divine revelation and, by the attesting signs, God confirms (makes honourable) the new allegiance. The strategic advances represented by these events overcome opposition in each city: religious persecution in Jerusalem,

syncretism in Samaria, political oppression at Caesarea and pagan religion at Ephesus. Allusions to Babel form a recurring theme. In each city two group episodes are contrasted. One involves a reversal of Babel. Speaking in tongues, where it is recorded, becomes a sign of true unity among diverse peoples: confusion is removed as Christ is proclaimed. The other group episode reprises Babel. Speaking with one voice, paradoxically, becomes a sign of false unity maintained by force or delusion. But when Christ is proclaimed, the real confusion is uncovered. The august Sanhedrin dissolves into a lynch mob; the Samaritans escape the confusion of Simon's magic; the crowd praising Herod sees him struck down; and the riot at Ephesus dissolves in futility.

Inaugural events, being unique in salvation history, are not straightforwardly normative for later Christians. Some conclusions, however, may be drawn. There is no instance where Spirit baptism precedes faith in Christ. The Spirit is not given by baptism in water, since Spirit baptism may precede or follow it (Caesarea, Samaria). The Spirit does not effect conversion, since the Spirit may be given later (Pentecost, Samaria). At Pentecost and Samaria unique circumstances apply, but Spirit baptism normally happens in proximity to conversion and baptism (Caesarea, Ephesus).

Luke narrates two instances of baptism in the Spirit which are not inaugural, and therefore correspond to the situation of later Christians; those of Saul and Peter's hearers on the day of Pentecost. In both cases faith in Christ is evident. In both cases baptism in the Spirit is spoken of in proximity to conversion and baptism; in neither case is there any mention of delay or any question of uncertainty. We may infer from the inaugural events that Spirit baptism is neither effected by baptism nor the means of conversion. Rather, as is clear from Acts 1:8, the coming of the Spirit brings empowerment for mission.

What may be claimed for an approach to baptism in the Spirit which takes account of corporate inauguration? First, it makes plain why Spirit baptism attested by miraculous signs is not mentioned in connection with most conversion accounts in Acts: they were not inaugural. Second, it explains why Spirit baptism with attesting signs is not recorded for any individual: inaugural events are corporate. And, third, it explains why even in the case of Saul and Peter's audience at Pentecost, where the gift of the Spirit is explicitly announced, Luke records no signs such as speaking in tongues. In Luke's theology all who believe and are baptised receive the Spirit (Acts 2:38) and individual Christians may possess miraculous gifts (e.g., Act 21:8-11). However, what he narrates is what is important to him: the miraculous signs at Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus mark the first incorporation of whole new categories of believers into the kingdom of God.

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*Unless otherwise stated Greek text is from Nestle-Aland 28 or Ralfs-Hanhart, and Hebrew from Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. The Greek text of Josephus follows the 1890 Niese edition. English biblical text (block quotes or in-line in italics) is from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Other versions cited are as follows:*

- CEV*    *Contemporary English Version*
- ESV*    *English Standard Version*
- GNB*    *Good News Bible*
- NABRE* *New American Bible Revised Edition*
- NASB*   *New American Standard Bible*
- NIV*    *New International Version, 2011*
- NJB*    *New Jerusalem Bible*
- NETS*   *New English Translation of the Septuagint*

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